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Between Whiles...

BY
MATTHEW HOLLAND SWANER



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



MATTIE HOLLAND SWANN,
KATIE AND THE "BIT O' STRING" BOY.

BETWEEN WHILES.



....POEMS....

BY

Mattie Holland Swaney.



1900;
THE EDITOR PUBLISHING CO
CINCINNATI

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DEDICATED

To the blessed little mother who has always represented to me, all the best of life, sunshine, music and love.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Losted Things - - - - -	1
Please Make it Brown - - - - -	1
The Business Woman - - - - -	2
Ephraim's Legacy - - - - -	2
A Bit o' String - - - - -	3
Mrs. K - - - - -	4
Our Jack - - - - -	4
The Vacant House - - - - -	5
The Coat and the Man - - - - -	5
The Two Soldiers - - - - -	6
The Woman Dead - - - - -	7
Alleine Connell - - - - -	8
Wylie - - - - -	8
Starry Eyes - - - - -	9
Helen - - - - -	9
First Love - - - - -	10
Her Youth - - - - -	10
Eleanor - - - - -	10
To General W. L. Cabell - - - - -	10
Roberta - - - - -	11
How to Succeed - - - - -	11
The Baddest Boy - - - - -	11
A Bad Dream - - - - -	12
A Texas Wind - - - - -	13
The End - - - - -	13
When Katy's Home From School - - - - -	14
Reward - - - - -	15
Lost: A Piece of Advice - - - - -	15
That Child - - - - -	16
Love Versus Charity - - - - -	17
Goin' Home to Mother - - - - -	18
Margaret - - - - -	19
A Song - - - - -	19
Stand Fast - - - - -	20

Seed Time and Blossoming	-	-	-	-	-	21
Barred	-	-	-	-	-	21
High Tide	-	-	-	-	-	22
To the Daughters of the Confederacy	-	-	-	-	-	23
Muv'ver, Are you There?	-	-	-	-	-	24
Children of the Wind	-	-	-	-	-	25
Afterward	-	-	-	-	-	26
Remembrance	-	-	-	-	-	26
Missing	-	-	-	-	-	27
Found: A Heart	-	-	-	-	-	28
The Reason Why	-	-	-	-	-	28
Mrs. Jim	-	-	-	-	-	29
The Heights	-	-	-	-	-	30
A Day and a Smile	-	-	-	-	-	30
Leisure Land	-	-	-	-	-	31
Let it Be	-	-	-	-	-	33
Barriers	-	-	-	-	-	34
Returned	-	-	-	-	-	35
A Smile	-	-	-	-	-	36
Three Degrees	-	-	-	-	-	37
Ghosts	-	-	-	-	-	37
Gathering up his Toys	-	-	-	-	-	38
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	39
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	40
A Sunbeam	-	-	-	-	-	41
Just a Little Daily Fret	-	-	-	-	-	41
Rest	-	-	-	-	-	42
Lost! A Heart	-	-	-	-	-	43
Life's Garment	-	-	-	-	-	44
A Creed	-	-	-	-	-	45
Finished	-	-	-	-	-	46
A Parting	-	-	-	-	-	47
No Hurryland	-	-	-	-	-	48
Soon	-	-	-	-	-	49
Despair	-	-	-	-	-	49
Two Wishes	-	-	-	-	-	50
Fruition	-	-	-	-	-	51
Poverty	-	-	-	-	-	52
Joys	-	-	-	-	-	53
Grandmother	-	-	-	-	-	53
Nature's Voices	-	-	-	-	-	54
A Dead Hope	-	-	-	-	-	55
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	56
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	57

CONTENTS

v

Epitaph	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
An Old Letter	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Two Pictures	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
Ran's Story	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
Friends	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
Good-bye	-	-	-	-	-	-	63
That Day	-	-	-	-	-	-	64
Her Last Letter	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
In Memoriam	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
From the Car Window	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
One Heart	-	-	-	-	-	-	68
Living and Loving	-	-	-	-	-	-	69
Slumber	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
That Same Jo	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
Guardian Angels	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
Over the Border	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
Sweet Words	-	-	-	-	-	-	73
Broken, A Promise!	-	-	-	-	-	-	74
Good-bye	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
How to Measure a Man	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
Land o' the Leal	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
A Dead Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	77
Fire Pictures	-	-	-	-	-	-	78
Reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	79
His Last Letter	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
Last Days	-	-	-	-	-	-	81
Bon Soldat	-	-	-	-	-	-	82
Two Sunsets	-	-	-	-	-	-	83
May Time	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
To-morrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	86
Query	-	-	-	-	-	-	87
Waking Dreams	-	-	-	-	-	-	88

BETWEEN WHILES.

Between Whiles.

LOSTED THINGS.

A lot of things are losted
That never get found at all,
But there's no use to cry about it;
If it's dolly, or top, or ball.
But will somebody rise an' 'splain it,
Why the losted tempers don't stay,
But come sneakin' around the corner,
And are home that very same day.

PLEASE MAKE IT BROWN.

Long years ago; so many now,
I do not care to tell;
For soon enough old Time will weave
O'er us, his dreary spell,
When we were children all at home
And breakfast time came 'round,
Our mother gave us what she thought,
Would keep us well and sound.

When pouring coffee, she put in,
Of milk, a generous share;
So much, indeed, we children thought
She hardly played us fair;
And "Buddie boy," who stammered so,
(He since has won renown,)
Would view his cup and softly ask
Her, "Please to—m—make it *brown*."

BETWEEN WHILES

I have been much about since then,
 In many a state and town;
 And though I've met the smile of fate,
 More often than her frown,
 Yet oftentimes when life has been
 Not quite a bed of down;
 I think I hear a child's voice say,
 "Please m—make it *brown*."

When things don't have the proper ring,
 And sentiments don't rhyme
 With acts—I always turn
 Me back to childhood's time,
 And wish for undiluted truth,
 Intense and well boiled down.
 Or, just to use the dear old words,
 "Please make it *brown*."

THE BUSINESS WOMAN.

Business sir, from head to toe,
 Plenty o' what you call "go,"
 Yet quiet like, as any mouse,
 Never'd know she's in the house.
 Smart as any trap o' steel,
 With a heart sir, 'at can feel,
 Doin' jus' the work o' two.
 ("Paid for *one*," yes that's all true.)
 Here's to her steady hand an' brain,
 An' all life's blessin's in her train.

EPHRAIM'S LEGACY.

My son, dis po' ole head o' mine
 'Ill soon be hot no mo.'
 Dere's sumpin' I mus' say ter yo'
 Befo' its time ter go.
 Spread yore finanshul butter on,
 If spread it thin yer mus',
 As ebenly as possible—
 An' some lef' fur de crus'.

Don' heap it up in spots, my boy,
An' some spots chokin' dry,
But spread it wid a keerful han'
An' wid a study eye.

Don' wear good clo'se an' go widout
A good squar' meal ter eat.
Don' sport a cane when yo' ain' got
A whole shoe ter yo' feet.

Remember w'ot de ole man say—
To git along, yo' mus'
Spread yore finanshul butter smooth
An' leave some fur de crus'.

A BIT O' STRING.

There ain't a single blessed chair,
Nor washstand knob, nor door,
But has got a bit o' string, sir,
A hangin' to it sure.
You may cast your eagle peepers,
All round, 'pon everything,
And never fail to find it;
A ragged bit o' string.

He ain't much bigger'n sixpence;
The boy as ties 'em there.
He's playin' horsey now, ir,
With a bit o' string an' chair.
You can't untie a bundle,
But he's round, that teency mite,
Complainin' that he "needs a string"
To fly his little kite.

It's a dreadful sight o' work to go
Untyin' after him.
His mama says she never can
Keep things a lookin' trim.
Beats all 'at ever I did see,
He's thes so pesky smart,
I've even found them strings o' his
A hangin' to my heart.

MRS. K.

Thought a sight o' Mrs. K—
Wish't she hadn't gone away,
Thought we'd got her here to stay.
Just a kind o' way she had,
Had to be piracious bad
Not to like the way of her;
Tell you what my gentle sir—
Things got worse an' lonesomer.
Wonder if that neighborhood,
She'll reach some time (for she's that good)
Is needin' her as mnch as we,
'At give her all our love so free.

OUR JACK.

It's hard for you to b'lieve the things
That our dog Jack has done,
But mama 'll tell you it's the truth
'Bout every single one.
He goes with Rose, the Jersey cow,
When she's put out to graze—
And takes the greatest care of her
On bright and rainy days.

And when she gets her tail all full
Of those bad sticker burs,
Jack knows she hasn't sense enough,
In that old head of hers,
To get them out, so there he sits,
And pulls them one by one,
With his sharp teeth, and never stops
Till all the job is done.

And sometimes, in the dead of night,
He gives a funny bark,
That mama knows means "something wrong
Out here in the dark."
And sure enough, when they go out,
The calf's got to the cow,
Or Rose has pulled the hay all down;
"I told you so—bow wow!"

He's such a very loving thing—
His heart's so big and kind,
That mama says she likes to think
He has a soul and mind.
I can't begin to tell you now
Quite all of his smart ways,
"None know him but to love him,
None name him but to praise."

THE VACANT HOUSE.

The tenant of the house has gone to parts unknown,
The heavy curtains—fringed with brown and gold,
Are close, close drawn and fastened down,
With not one ray of light to cheer the lone.

Ah well—the house was, after all, but clay,
Not made to last—it crumbled day by day.
When life—the tenant—left, God took the key.
He only knows the house's secret mystery.

THE COAT AND THE MAN.

There is much in the coat, besides the man,
(And I'm telling what I know)
Whatever its cloth, if spick and span,
Or if it has seen the roses blow
Many a spring—so much depends
Upon its birthdays—whether it counts
A very few or a score of friends.

Keener than any divining rod
In search of a hidden stream—
The coat of a man might tell a tale
Of things you would hardly dream,
Of a man who grasped you by the hand
(When the coat was new and fine)
Whose cordial grip and genial smile,
Thrilled thro' the heart like wine.

Of how he passed on the other side,
(When the coat had older grown)
Though the same man did within abide,
Save with some illusions flown.
Of a woman who laid her sunny head
'Gainst the poor old faded thing,
And loved you as well, though you had not bread,
As though you were crowned and King.

Why shouldn't a heart that's warm and true
And full as a heart can hold
Of manliness, (and *men* are few)
Be the same in a coat that's old?
God grant the time be coming near,
And that miracle yet may be,
When whatever coat a man may wear,
His soul's royal raiment we'll see.

THE TWO SOLDIERS.

One was a chapeau father wore,
With gory stains, and crown all rent,
Where bullets ploughed; and written dim,
"Battle of Franklin—Sixty Four."

Close to the relic of grim old war,
Down in the old trunk's dark recess,
The baby's white lace hood I saw,
Its every fold a soft caress,

To the ancient hat with its tale of woe
And strife and suffering all in vain,
Its wearer dead long years ago,
Forgot the anguish and the pain.

But the little white hood adown the road
Of life, abreast with the rank and file,
Has still his good broad sword to wield,
And the march of many a weary mile.

THE WOMAN DEAD.

Much good they said of the woman dead,
(Oh rare was the smile of her lips)
And they decked her as though for a bridal train,
As though it were all of it not in vain;
Now she had done with life's long pain,
And the careless clasp of her finger tips,
Held a rose, as for a bride just wed.

When she was living they did not say
A word they thought. for she had no need
(Or so *they* said) for a breath of praise;
And so she walked life's devious ways,
Threading its puzzling intricate maze;
And what if her heart did often bleed,
And hold grim old despair at bay.

If she but knew! do you suppose
She could not have understood
All the honor they meant to bring,
The generous words—all free from sting,
The blossoms fit for a Queen or King?
And not to know! Oh if she could!
And she lightly held her rose.

Closed are the eyes of the woman dead,
Weary from life's hot glare,
Sweetly cold in the smile that sealed
The firm lips that no word revealed,
Of all that the close shut eyes concealed,
Of all that a strong brave heart may bear,
By a word of praise unfed.

ALLEINE CONNELL.

A mother here on this sad old earth,
Grieved for her darling far away.
Ever and ever thro' toil by day,
And bitter lonely tears by night,
Barely the tiniest rift of light,
Brightened the desolate path she trod
Though she knew her treasure safe with God.

A little white angel near the gate
Of Heaven—inside, with a listening face
Seemed to be waiting. She sadly said,
“My mother on earth grieves for me, dead.
O won't you send her a ladder of love,
That will reach as high as our heaven above?”

Strange peace the mother felt that day.
She knew there must be a time and way
To find the face of her little maid,
So staff in hand and unafraid,
Pushing aside the shades of sin
That we poor earthlings are walking in,
She came to the shining ladder of love,
That leaned on the walls of the courts above.

WYLIE.

For years the grass has waved above
His quiet breast,
The pines sung softly—lulling
Him to rest.

For years the house has heard no tone
Of his dear speech.
His hand has slipped the clasp of ours,
And out of reach

Lies folded with its mate
In soft repose
Over his still heart, where the wild
Sad night wind blows.

And yet he still is with us,
True hearted ever.
Such lives as his move on and on,
Death ends them never.

STARRY EYES.

Starry eyes—you've been long away,
(Such a wee boy to be missed so much.)
Your tiny feet in strange paths stray.
We think of you, long for you day by day.
The stars at night with dumb surprise,
Fancy us not so overwise
To gaze so long with tear-wet eyes—
But pushing the dogmas and creeds aside
And marching with faces toward the east,
He who has told us "that one of the least"
Will safely to you our footsteps guide.

HELEN.

She ain't so big, sir—just
A weency thing 'at can
Reach up an' touch your heart.
Got little lovin' ways,
'At fill the days with grace,
An' makes our weather fair,
With the sunshine of her face.

FIRST LOVE.

It is a bud that rarely blooms
To fullest flower—its perfume
Lingers in the heart and brings
A breath of spring—long after the frost
Of life's cold winter settles
Thick upon us.

HER YOUTH.

What matter if a wintry rime
Is in her hair, when her dear eyes
Are full of youth's sweet summer time,
And in her mind's bright garden spot,
There is a wealth of tropic bloom
That folds one in its blest perfume.

ELEANOR.

There are a few sweet souls who never know,
Life's winter time—they always bring
Sunshine and a breath of spring
Along their train. The flowers blow
For them forever. They keep pace
Always with youth and love and grace.

TO GENERAL W. L. CABELL.

There is no age save of the heart,
And he who letteth not the frost
And rime of the cold world encrust,
His spirit—hath not lost
The sweetest thing life holds in trust,
His love and fellowship with man.

ROBERTA.

Can you ever fancy her tall and stately,
With queenly walk of languid grace?
The little maid, will she talk sedately?
Miss laughing eyes with the dimpled face!

She is only about as tall as your heart is,
Answering its every loving throb.
Roberta sounds like an Ave Maria,
But the song to reach our hearts—is Bob.

HOW TO SUCCEED.

If you've a bad temper, don't lose it I pray,
Temper and wine improve with the keeping;
Hold it in leash or some fine day
It will rise like a mad thing all barriers leaping.

Remember poor Job, and of him take a lesson
In patience. 'Tis a plant with a bitter seed,
But it bears rich fruit, sweet and refreshing,
That will ripen in time of need.

Human nature's your lesson; study its pages.
That is the key note to all the rest;
You'll arrive at the fact, after easy stages,
That square pegs fit into square holes best.

THE BADDEST BOY.

I wonder if there ever was
A boy so natshall mean,
That Santy didn't call on him,
An' he didn't care a bean!

I did hear my ma tellin' once
Of how a fellow played
Hookey, 'way from school all day,
An' then just stayed and stayed

A minnow fishin'—till 'twas time
For all the rest to come—
An' then he brought his books along
As innercent, to home.

But his ma found him out,
(An' say, Old Santy heard it too,)
An' what you spect was in his sock?
Why switches, not a few.

He didn't 'tickler mind the ones
His ma used up so free,
But switches stead o' goodies—
Was hard as X. Y. Z.

A BAD DREAM.

I had a dream the other night,
An' I fairly shook with fright.
Dreampt of stockin's everywhere
In the houses, here and there.
An' I felt so sorter sad
'At my heart ached awful bad,
Seein' of 'em danglin' there,
Jus' as empty—in the air.

Yes sir, empty! not a one
Had been filled—'twant no fun
To think about them babies' eyes
Lookin' red an' teary wise.
Then somebody up an' said:
"Why Old Santy—he's gone dead—"
An' with that I cried an' cried
Cos' he'd been an' gone an' died;
Then the breakfast bell from down below,
Said, "Come down stairs, you lazy Joe,"
An' I was *glad* my dream wan't so.

A TEXAS WIND.

Sometimes he's quiet as a lamb
All day long,
Or else a-takin' small cat naps
'Tween hum an' song.

An' then jus' when all decent folks
Is safe abed
He's up an' tearin' round like mad
Upon his head.

Pokes his sharp nose in every place
Where he's no biz.
An' some one rises to remark, "The wind
Has riz."

Takes the clothes clear off the line,
O, my!
An' leaves 'em in another county
Not close by.

He's got a searchin' warrant for
Your very bones.
Finds 'em too, an' leaves you
Cold as stones.

Wish he'd go away an' stay?
Nope, not I.
Cause I need to be friends with him
'Bout next July.

THE END.

Living—they dwelt as far apart
As might be; when either heard
Good of the other—every gracious word
Was molten lead upon the other grudging heart.

Dead! Oh, strange sad fate,
They lie together—side by side,
They, whose paths could never verge too wide,
Yet passed together thro' death's narrow gate.

And humbled lie there—nothing loath,
Together. Oh, bitterness—if they but know.
Yet, green impartial grass on both graves grow,
And murmuring pines sing lullabies to both.

WHEN KATY'S HOME FROM SCHOOL.

I haven't had so much as just
The slightest glimpse, it's true, sir,
But I am sure she's home and trust
To make it clear to you, sir.

Let's go into the dining room,
The safe door's open wide,
And things there look all upside down,
None in their place abide.

There's crumbs upon the table too,
And many on the floor.
Her gossamer, I grieve to say,
Is hanging on the door.

Her bonnet, that would if it could
Keep her fair face freckle free,
Looks just as though it tried to make
Apologies to me.

There's no use asking how I know
That Katy's home from school,
'Tis plain to all, save those "who sit
'Pon a three legged stool."

A book, a slate, and pencil box,
Untidy sprawling there,
Just where they hadn't ought to be,
Upon a parlor chair.

I guess you're willin' to admit,
That worked by well-known rule,
And the evidence all in, will prove
That Katy's home from school.

REWARD.

When he the hero died—men said
 “He could not be replaced—his like
 There never was;” and thousands came
 To look upon him and to call his name
 With bated breath, he who lay—
 Pale and laurel crowned that mournful day,
 The idol of the nation, cold and dead.

* * * * *

A woman’s face, old, worn and thin,
 Was in a coffin. Few were there;
 Her children wept—the neighbors tried
 To give such comfort as they might. Aside,
 They said: “She is so weary it is best,”
 And they were glad she was at rest;
 To wish her back were almost sin.

In heaven that day the gates came wide,
 The man of fame on earth and she who left
 Few to mourn her, both passed through
 The jewelled portals. Strangely told,
 The sweetest welcome and the crown of gold
 Went to the humble mother, worn and old.
 The honors to a nation’s love on earth
 Had been his own—and he had had their worth.

 LOST: A PIECE OF ADVICE.

“Get us a bank book!” and what for, pray?
 To jot down the last comments of
 An irate baker? or to set forth at length
 Our urgent landlord’s last oration?
 ’Tis true, we might write up the eloquence
 Of that patient and long suffering man,
 The butcher. But what’s the use?
 Suppose for sake of argument,
 We tried your bank book, as a means
 Of unraveling the tangled state
 Of our finances.

Methinks the credit side would soon
Develop an alarming case of dropsy,
And the debit, with lean starved visage earn
Our heartiest sympathy.
This too in such short order as to down
Even the soaring eagle courage
Of an S. M. agent.
Your idea's good—go plant it then
In fertile ground, where it may bravely grow—
And thrive, nor drop it in such sterile soil as this,
Where nothing lives save stern necessities,
That choke and sap the life of such hot-house
Plants—as bank book.

THAT CHILD.

That child is mighty sleepy,
 So he says,
His ma she don't believe him,
 Knows his ways.
She bathes him though, and with
 A kiss o' two
Tucks him in bed as warm—
 Thinks she's through!

Oh no, indeed—she's just begun,
 For now,
He says he's sleepy not a bit.
 I vow,
I never saw a child stay 'wake
 So long.
He turns an' twists about an' sings
 His favorite song.

All 'bout a little skylark
 Up in the sky,
Over and over again until
 We're nigh
Distracted. Six times an' more
 His ma would place
The cover back upon that child
 Up to his face.

Then 'fore she can sit down
It's off again,
Until she talks of switches and he says
He's got a pain.
His ma she rubs that child, an' then
He's well.
Then there's "a piece 'bout Jack
He wants to tell."

'Bout then he thinks he'd like
Another bed,
An' sure the thing is done as quick
As said.
He gets what he's been needin' long,
That grew
On the peach tree in the garden.
When he's through

Snifflin'—an' snuggles down
By an' by,
Says he "just loves his ma
High as the sky."
'Taint but a minute more at we
Look an' see,
Him sleep—an' lookin' angel like
That child—he be.

LOVE vs. CHARITY.

'Twas just a simple song of home,
Sung in a childish treble,
That somehow touches hearts that roam,
And—like a common pebble

Cast on the water's surface smooth,
E'en makes a great commotion,
As tiny things oft will, forsooth,
In our hearts' turbid ocean.

The little trembling hand outheld,
Was filled to overflowing,
The hurried donor's steps compelled
Another way were going.

But one passed not, and pausing there,
Clasped close the little fingers,
Speaking words as soft as song,
To heart of that poor singer.

Upon the child's wan cheek she left
A soft kiss—and another
On the forehead all bereft
Of kisses from a mother.

* * *

In counting o'er her treasures bright,
In cold and dreary garret,
The childish eyes grew dim that night;
She weighed not gifts by carat.

A slip of paper with a name,
And "come to me in trouble,"
The memory of two kisses came
And outweighed the silver double.

GOIN' HOME TO MOTHER.

I'm goin' home to where I used to be,
Before I'd counted up so many years,
Or dimmed my eyes with such hot tears;
Goin' to once more be young an' free,
And lay my tired head on mother's knee.

Strange how it takes a feller back so fast,
To them other days so long time past;
There's somethin' in that hand o' hers,
That young thoughts and young fancies stirs
From out the mouldy heap where they've been cast

By gray old time. I just want
To say my prayers like I did
When she would say 'em first and bid
Me foller her. No sweeter voice
Ever made another heart rejoice.

I'm goin' to lie abed and sleep late,
Just to feel how good it is to hear
Her say—"Going to sleep all day, my dear?"
An' then lie still an' wait
Until I feel her kiss. Hard, hard fate—

To cheat me of her kisses all these years.
Kind Heaven, let me drift no more
Beyond the safe an' happy shore,
Of home. No aching eyes, nor heart, but rather
Likest heaven—goin' home to mother.

MARGARET.

O summer breeze that wanders
In and out, high and low,
I listen for the echo of her laughter,
But hear you only in the tree tops blow.
O sunshine, as I watch you flitting
Past the shadows here and there,
I miss the glory and the brightness,
Of her sweet face everywhere.
Breeze and flowers—you too, sunshine,
Do you miss her? Past the blue
Of the far off sky—we'll find her,
The little maid; ours the rue,
Hers the flowers—and God's smile shining through.

A SONG.

However poor the place, I'd never know,
If her dear face were there,
If in a torrid land or 'mid the snow;
To be with her, my prayer;
O sweet the simplest crust
She shared with me,
Alone, but ashes, dust,
All else would be.

No chords can ever charm
Like her soft speech,
Blest past all future harm,
If in its reach.
O if she were but near,
And I could bow
To feel her blessed touch
Upon my brow.

Drifting on Life's restless ocean
From friends and from country afar,
A mother's unfaltering devotion
Will shine thro' the gloom like a star.

STAND FAST.

O heart, 'gainst whom the wind and wave
Of fate whirls fast and cruel,
Didst never see old ocean beat
And lash himself in rage complete,
The while made ready many a grave,
For ship, for man and jewel.

Didst thou not see a rock-bound coast,
Its outlines stern, unsmiling
Against the sky, whence they have stood,
Those firm old rocks, 'gainst time and flood
And mocked the angry sea's wild boast,
Its idle hours beguiling.

Let come what may—the cruel sea
Of circumstance come surging
As if to swallow thee and thine—
But stand thou firm, O heart of mine,
Not flinching or diverging
From out thy path and thou shalt be

As those gray rocks. And Fate, who knows
When she has met defeat, will call
The hungry waves that soon are calm
And mild as any timid lamb
Back to their lairs. So doth fall
The swollen seas of human woes.

Stand thou but fast, O heart of gold,
Prepared for aught that doom may send,
The worst can be no more than worst,
And if thou steel thee from the first
Thy stronghold thou wilt sure defend,
And hold thy own serene and bold.

SEED TIME AND BLOSSOMING.

Suppose thou hadst a gift
Of magic seedlings—that where e'er
Thy footsteps strayed, thy hand,
Should scatter tiny things that sprung
Into a beauteous wealth of bloom, and bland,
Soft, fragrant breath that flung
Its sweetness far and near.

Greater your magic gift I trow,
For as you pass along your way
Many a little, tender word of cheer,
A hand clasp or a sunny smile,
Will scatter blossoms in some pathway drear,
And shorten life's rough journey many a mile.
Then give them without stint each day.

BARRED.

Closed is thy gate, O year, and barred.
All our puny strength is unavailing,
And the woe of our weak human wailing
Will not bring back thy pathways daisy starred.

Only through those bars adamantine
Shall we catch bright glimpses here and there
Of our own pleasant places, dazzling fair,
As wreaths of blossoms amaranthine.

We are shut out—and yet—and yet—
I fear your strongest bolts will never keep
The frowning wraiths of deeds I pray may sleep,
Nor wake to smite us with regret.

But if your iron bars should futile be
And those dark things arise their graves above,
I pray you, let some angel deed of love
That once was mine, come too, to comfort me.

HIGH TIDE.

Oh, the bliss of it! just to lie
With grass for a pillow, the world aloof,
The rhythmic wash of the tireless sea
That brings rich freight of dreams to me,
And the endless length and breadth of sky
For a sunny roof.

No stern old Thought, with his wretched train
Of weary fancies sick and sad
That move in the same old beaten track,
Backward and forward—forward and back,
With never a turn to the long old lane
And nothing sweet or glad.

Strange how the years go backward, too,
Dropping behind by fives and tens
So fast that wrinkles are smoothed away
And brown the hair that had grown gray;
Lips thrill warm with youth's own hue,
And life's blurred lens

Grows clear again with the roseate light
That comes with the place and the time,
With the soft salt air, the sea and the sky,
The gleam of sail boats wafted by,
And great ships seeking a far-off clime
Fading away from sight.

All things harsh and sad and wrong
Take to them wings and fly away,
While life grows young and blest and true
As God's own heaven of shining blue;
Sea and heart sing a deep sweet song
The livelong day.

TO THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY.

No lack is there of poets and of sages
Who dipped their vibrant pens in fire and tears,
To chronicle thro' all the coming ages
Deeds that the whole wide world reveres.
Whether his rank was of the high or lowest,
Fair garlands deck his last long, narrow home,
Whether a slab of pine or costly marble
Rises above his head in stately dome.

Many a marble shaft shines—whitely gleaming
O'er our broad South—in grassy spot,
And many an eye with saddest tears is streaming
For the dear dead that still are unforget.
The passing years but add a brighter halo
To crown the memory of those lost and dear,
The dauntless ones who faced grim death serenely
And answered to the angel roll call—"Here!"

No need of praise, 'twill come unstinted
Thro' all the centuries of gray old time;
'Twill come in song, in history and story.
Of how they yielded up their life's sweet prime.
There is one theme on which the pen should linger,
Strange hitherto to those of brightest fame,
That creeps not into song of one sweet singer,
And I must speak, if yet in measure lame,

Of him who in the pride of youth exulting
Left her—with her piteous eyes and aching heart—
A weak, frail thing who yet has sent him from her,
Knowing, feeling life itself depart.
He, to stir and action—she, returning
To the beaten track of trivial things
That thralling body, left the soul impatient
Seeking its absent mate on tireless wings.

When stern want thrust in his haggard visage
The heart that ached grew cold and wild with fear.
Oh, slight the barrier of her small white fingers,
And the little fair-haired ones—how dear!

He, the absent one, may now be lying
 With sightless eyes turned toward heaven's blue
 Never to meet hers again with love undying,
 Or bless her with their light so strong and true.

Some mother gave perhaps her only treasure,
 Her one brave boy, whom yet she may not keep:
 Her little lad—the babe that oft has rested
 His bright head on her breast in sweetest sleep.
 Alas! the boyish head will reach no more
 The blessed haven that its childhood knew.
 Low, low it lies when past the battle's roar,
 Dabbled with blood and damp with death's cold dew.

Oh, bride that was to be—and widowed
 Ere bridal wreath could grace thy shining hair,
 Thou hast, indeed, a crown of sharp thorns pressing
 Its cruel weight into thy forehead fair.
 Many a hero maimed and scarred, yet living,
 Came back to tell of struggles past and done;
 Many a woman's heart lay dead within her
 To wake no more with any rising sun.

Our pens may rust and leave to cold oblivion
 Their angel courage and unfaltering trust,
 When life and hope and all indeed but honor
 Lay prone and broken down there in the dust.
 They need no marble shaft to tell their story—
 Nay—I mistake when I would take their part,
 They long ago found their full meed of glory—
 In God—and a woman's faithful heart.

MUV'VER, ARE YOU THERE?

I hear a small voice singing all day long
 Just the merest snatches of a song,
 Building a house of blocks or digging wells,
 And then a sudden silent pause that tells
 He's thought of something—next I hear
 An anxious quavering—"Muv'ver are you there?"

And never ceasing, still at intervals
 All through the empty rooms the query rings,

The lonely little voice that no more sings,
But filled with poignant notes of vague alarm
Loses the smoothness of its childish calm,
And vibrant through the house, almost a prayer,
A trembling, frequent, "Muv'ver are you there?"

Some day, alas! shall mother sit and wait
Alone in empty rooms, or by the gate
Look up and down, expecting it may be,
The little lad who answered Fate's decree!
Oh empty homes—where rosy faces grown
To bearded men—past whom the years have flown—
Though many claims may draw them other where,
Back in the old place, "Mother still is there!"

CHILDREN OF THE WIND.

You say it is only my eerie fancy,
And you think 'tis the old gray oak tree sighing
When the cold wind lashes its poor bare branches,
And sends them shuddering and flying.
Nay, listen again, outside the window,
Down the desolate length of its icy pane
I can hear the soft trailing of ghostly fingers,
A hand that falteringly pauses and lingers,
Pleading to be let in out of the rain.

It must be the night wind's wayward children;
They surely grow weary when wandering far;
May even lose sight of the trail they followed,
Forgetting the place of their guiding star.
But when in despair I raise the window
To take them in, they have wandered away,
To carry the music of their soft wailing
And the uncertain sound of something trailing,
The sound of their ghostly little fingers
And their minor chords, among other singers.

AFTERWARD.

Oh the piteous depths of silence
When beloved voices cease,
And leave us a bitter patience
For their heritage of peace.

Life's duties, stern, insistent,
Move on in ceaseless round,
Cold hearted—never missing
The one beloved sound.

Only time, who is kinder,
Leads us gently away,
Toward the eastward country
Where the light of a brighter day

Flushes the sky, and nearer,
As life's worn garment falls
We shall hear the voices dearer
Than all in memory's halls.

'Twill not seem long—the waiting—
Forgotten the pain and the scars
In the thrill of delight at the meeting,
Past the limit and light of the stars.

REMEMBRANCE.

Some night when you shall softly say she is asleep,
And know that you will need no more your vigil keep,
And when you've pressed upon the eyes that will not
wake

One kiss, all warm with life—for dear love's sake

Leave all my faults—just how many God will know—
There with the poor clay 'neath where the grasses blow.
But carry with you this one thought I pray,
Through waking night and weary careworn day:

“She loved so well”—just that and nothing more,
And I shall feel it to my dead heart’s core.
Loved so well, that once to call her “friend”
Was still to know its truth to life’s far end.

MISSING.

I owned a number of swift winged hours,
Bright winged, beloved, beauteous things,
Willing, true hearted messengers of ours,
With heaven’s light upon their restless wings.
I held them as hostages to Father Time.
One burden I had planned each wing should bear;
Some sweet, bright deed, some pure and noble thought,
A holy dream, perhaps, an earnest prayer.

I knew their pinions were so strong and sure,
Straight and unerring they would find their way;
The instinct of the homing bird is truer
Than blossoms to the call of early May.
I heard a gentle whispering sound about me,
A rustle like the whirr of tiny wings,
And then I felt a sense of loss and silence,
Like the passing of a loved voice brings.

Lo! far upward in the leagues of space,
In the loving last rays of the setting sun,
That glorifies the humblest and the poorest place,
Flew fast my truant hours, one by one.
Around them little midgets quick of wing,
The robber moments that had set them free,
My messengers that whatever Time may bring,
Can never, in the world, come back to me.

FOUND: A HEART.

Found: a heart of virgin gold ;
 Though fashioned quaintly,
 'Twas cast in a long since vanished mould,
 And the chasing shows, of this trinket old,
 Upon it faintly.

Long years ago I passed it by,
 Unseen, uncaring,
 Strange, other hands have let it lie,
 Nor ever come to it anigh,
 Its charm unsharing.

It is not polished over fine,
 I tell you plainly,
 The graver's hands left little sign,
 Upon this rugged heart of mine,
 Or touched it vainly.

I am content—for I am sure,
 Past unbelieving,
 That furnace fires have made it pure,
 All life's rough wear it will endure ;
 I am not grieving

That all the world may never know,
 It's true refining,
 Beyond the mere fine polished show,
 The gleam and meretricious glow,
 Of surface shining.

 THE REASON WHY.

I dinna understand the reason why,
 Tho' we toil all the day—my Jock and I—
 Yet poverty sits still within our cottage door,
 And each day wears the look that yester' wore.
 My Jock hath brawn an' muscle—aye an' brain,
 Yet duller men in chariots pass him by.

The reason why
 I canna' say, but this I know,
 No nobler heart than Jock's could God bestow.

We eat our simple fare in thankfu'ness
Nor crave the dainties spread before the high,
My Jock and I.
They quaff life's wine, an' we the lees,
An' wha can tell the reason why.

Ah weel—a little while an' we shall ken
Where cowslips grow an' green grass waves
Upon our humble graves,
It will be well for my dear Jock an' I,
We both shall ken life's reason why.

MRS. JIM.

She had a soul, had Mrs. Jim,
Too big for her body lithe and slim.
Beauty? I aint no call to note
The color of the nightingale's coat;
Only listen and wander back
Over memory's world wide track,
Thinkin' the old thoughts, sad an' sweet,
Follerin' mem'ry's flyin' feet
Back to the days that used to be,
When life was glad as glad could be.

What great deed did she ever do?
Don't know's that would intrust you;
Only a trifle here an' there,
Aliftin' up somebody's care,
Leavin' a smile where a sigh had been,
Makin' you feel like she was kin,
Makin' your heart feel good an' warm
When it had been in a beatin' storm;
Can't tell much what she did do,
Just playin' the angel through an' through.

THE HEIGHTS.

Because you see me plodding day by day
Down here in the valley 'tween the hills,
Seemingly content as any simple shepherd
Who tends his flocks and listens to the rills,

O do not doubt that I am slowly, surely tending
Toward the summit up there near the blue,
Where tint of hills and far off sky seem blending
Into the calm where we shall find the clue

Of our lost selves. The way is tangled, hidden,
But surely there's a footpath somewhere near.
'Mid rugged cliffs and boulders tempest ridden,
I yet shall find all that I hold most dear.

The way seems long, at times my feet grow weary,
The heart grows faint—the goal so long deferred,
From those who've reached the summit no kind zephyr
Brings back to our lone hearts one tender word.

Yet I plod on, tho' weak, and sometimes failing
To keep the path—I may not wander far,
For hope, whose beauty knows no age, no paling,
Shines just ahead, a bright and guiding star.

A DAY AND A SMILE.

O day to be glad in, so full of shine,
And balmy with hints of later Spring,
Dropped down from the glow of the sky as fine
As any my lady May will bring.
You make me think of a certain smile,
I cannot choose but remember well,
A smile so dear, so free from guile,
That speech is weak and poor to tell.

How it makes all things seem more true,
How nothing could go astray or wrong,
In the light of the spring clear eyes of blue,
And awakes in one's heart the sweetest song.

O day so balmy, so full of youth,
Thy burden of care cast to the winds;
O smile so perfect, so full of truth,
Can you tell me what is the tie that binds:

You two together on memory's wall,
Where hang the pictures that I love best.
O smile whose sweetness will never pall,
O day far brighter than all the rest.
You are not forgot when the sun goes down,
And the skies fade gray and the stars come out;
O smile, ye will live, say years to come,
Through times of anguish, pain and doubt.

LEISURE LAND.

If all the strained despairing tension,
Of life could be relaxed,
The tight-drawn heart strings loosed awhile,
That were so long o'ertaxed,
The weary brain that daily thought
And hoped and schemed and planned,
Nerving itself anew to meet
Life's fresh demand,

Could rest from effort, only wandering o'er
The field of happy thought,
Living but for the day of love,
By hope and pleasure sought;
With never the very faintest sting
Of unkind memory,
And ne'er a sigh or breath of pain,
For the misty yet to be,

Do you think that we could fold our hands
And ever be satisfied?
We have grown so used to the striving,
And the stern demands of pride.
Could the heartstrings loose without breaking?
They are strained so tight you see,
And the brain has been plotting and planning
So long—it would not be free.

So long it would not be bounded,
By the walls of leisure land—
It would weary of calm and quiet
And soft waves lapping sand.
It would yearn for its ancient kingdom,
Its storm tossed foamy crest,
The sweet wild joy of freedom,
The days devoid of rest.

No—I think we shall keep on plodding
As long as the light shall last,
With our eyes on the land of leisure,
That is nearing us so fast.
For the forces pent up within us,
Of heart and hand and brain,
Would fain tread even measure
In spite of the prick of pain.

We shall only leave off our striving
And take a breath of ease
When we sight the land of promise,
That only in dreams one sees.
It may not be long, for I fancy
That just between sunset and dark,
O'er the blue outline of mountains
And past even the song of the lark

I see just the faintest reflection
Of its glory and beauty and calm,
That changes the discord of living,
Into music that sounds like a psalm.
And I wait, for my soul can be patient,
And we shall be glad of a rest,
I think—nay I'm sure that it lieth
Over there somewhere in the west.

LET IT BE.

“Let it be coffee”—the children said,
When Mama poured kettle tea instead,
And Mama smiled at the “let it be;”
If they played it was coffee so would she.
May be the taste seemed better so
And they were content—so to let it go.

* * * * *

Why cannot we grown up children, too,
“Let it be” rosemary instead of rue?
What is the harm in a make believe
If it gives us ever so short reprieve
From the grinding cares of a prosy life,
Wearing away in ceaseless strife.

Nobody’s harmed if my wormwood draught
In the light and grace of a smile is quaffed.
Does it matter too—if I eat my crust
So that it seems not dry as dust?
Not all may drink from the chalice sweet,
Not all of life’s white bread may eat.

“Let it be” wine; who is to know
It never has been where the wine grapes grow.
This draught we drink with a sparkling eye,
As though it were golden Chartreuse—why
What does it matter? Let’s make believe,
And lull our hearts with the sweet reprieve!

BARRIERS.

What does it matter if love should meet
Scorn, indifference—hate, at last,
If it but once has had its past,
If it but tasted the chalice sweet,
When well nigh perished with thirst and fast.

Only the memory of God above,
With its infinite hold on the tiniest things
Can equal the deathless mind of love,
No matter how far it may choose to rove,
Nor how it may try its strength of wings.

Sometimes indeed it may seem to sleep,
And many a time appeareth dead,
A stone at the foot, a cross at the head,
And they who have stayed to watch and weep,
Have left it alone in its quiet bed.

But after the stone is rolled away,
The pallid thing we have fancied cold,
Secure and still in its deathly mould,
Sometimes comes in the twilight gray
To wake our hearts with the thrill of old.

What does it matter that you and I
Never may know where the other be?
Between us the waves of a boundless sea.
No world wide distance can signify,
Like the wall of silence 'tween you and me.

And yet sometimes I feel you near;
Distance is nothing—no space can mar,
Nor time—nor cold indifference bar
Your heart from mine—I have no fear
That even Heaven would be too far

If you were there and I left here,
For our souls to visit. 'Tis sweet to know
Sometime, somewhere, when the sun is low,
And the rush of day is departed, dear,
I'll come to you there in the afterglow.

RETURNED.

She hath been long away,
A whole sad year,
And now, O blest to-day,
I feel her near.

I catch the scent of violets
That only she doth wear,
Caught and prisoned, like my heart,
In the sunshine of her hair.

Many a tear hath dimmed mine eye
Since she was here,
Many a heart ache have I known,
And many a fear.

While she—no shadows mar,
Her beauteous face,
Her smiling heaven blue eyes,
Her witching grace.

But no less dear is she because
My grief's my own,
She is so fair—(tho' seen thro' tears)
To look upon.

I bid her welcome—then who knows,
What change a day may bring,
If only for her winsome looks,
She is so dear—O Spring!

A SMILE.

Somebody gave me a smile last night—
Who was the giver—I do not know,
Only the smile was so sweet—so bright—
It was born in her eyes and reached its height,
Then swift as the swiftest breezes blow—
Flashing down to the sweet red mouth,
Died in her dimples. Winds of the South,
Ye never beheld just such a smile,
In all your wanderings of many a mile.

Not a coquettish smile at all,
But it gave me the fairest of all fair dreams;
If she's dark or blonde I cannot recall,
O'er my senses there rests the thrall
Of the canny smile—that somehow seems
Some other less happy soul has lost,
And it fell to my share—the tempest tossed—
She did not think it worth her while,
To measure the distance she sent a smile.

Who was the blest—I'd like to know
Who sees that look in her beautiful eyes,
Who—happy—may wander to and fro,
And never too far for their love-lit glow—
Gentle as radiance from Paradise?
No old time Knight would do or dare
More than I—what would I care,
Should all the tempters of earth beguile,
If mine the talisman of her smile?

I know it came to me not by right,
Mistakenly floated past my way,
But if one clasp a star in darkest night,
To gladden the gloom and shed its light,
Who could blame me—would you, pray?
'Tis no harm to keep it—a smile astray
From its rightful owner—and some sweet day
Haply somebody—with eyes as true—
Will give me a smile, and mean it, too.

THREE DEGREES.

A hurrying and rushing with the throng
Thrusting and being thrust aside in turn,
A striving and fighting against wrong,
To always with an endless fever burn,
 Envy and strife,
 This is—Life.

A blissful quiet and a happy rest,
A closing weary eyelids over sightless eyes,
Folding work-marred hands on marble breast,
Lying 'neath God's sunny skies,
 Near daisies' breath—
 This is—Death.

But some unhappy souls do find
A most unhappy medium 'twixt the two,
And always thro' the fret and tangle wind
Their anguished way—and die a thousand
Deaths—while few
 Can see the strife,
 And this is—Death in Life.

GHOSTS.

There were tears in the voice of the wind last night,
As I heard him come hurrying by,
Just lingering a moment among the pines,
With a sound like a human sigh.
He slept for a little while—and then
Awoke with a cry of pain,
So full of despair that I could not turn
Back to my book again.

I was reading the tale of an old romance
While my fire burned redly low,
And fancied I saw in its roseate light
These actors of long ago.

But the cold night wind with ghostly strength
Rattled my window pane,
Rhyming my dreamy firelight thoughts
With its sorrowful refrain.

There must have been many a ghost abroad,
They are doomed to be still, poor things,
Till a friendly wind like that last night
Lends them a voice—and wings.
There was one like the voice of a little child
Wailing in grief and fright,
Away from its mother's sheltering arms,
Lost in the gloom and the night.

And one was the cry of a broken heart,
(For hearts do break—they say,)
That may not rest in its quiet grave
Where the rank green grasses sway.
One was the voice of a sin-tossed soul
Bearing the mark of Cain,
Seeking the grace it may not find,
Till the dead shall rise again.

Young dawn is near, and each pallid ghost
Creeps back to its lonely grave;
The night is theirs but the palest ray
Of daylight they may not rave.
My romance lies unfinished yet,
For its actors of long ago
Cannot speak to my soul like the ghostly things
That roam when the night winds blow.

GATHERING UP HIS TOYS.

He has fallen asleep—has baby,
Tired of so many toys,
That each in its turn delighted
This king of all restless boys.

They are scattered from parlor to kitchen,
And mother goes, gathering up
A ball, a horse and an engine,
Some blocks and a wee tin cup.

And smiling bestows on the sleeper
 A thistledown kiss for his cheek,
 And one for the sweet lips, parted
 As if but ready to speak.

* * * * *

Asleep at last—God giveth
 Sleep to the tired brain,
 And the heavy eye that looketh
 Too long—till the light doth wane.

A stern face, worn and weary
 With the marble white of death,
 And the hands crossed on the bosom,
 That shows no pulse of breath.

There are lines that were writ by passion,
 And many more by pain,
 And some that tell how useless
 His best hopes, and how vain.

His broken toys—where are they?
 Love—ambition—pride?
 They failed him here, so place them,
 In death—there by his side.

IN MEMORIAM.

She was not old—age cannot dim
 A heart that keeps in touch with nature's own,
 Whose tender love went out and centred close
 'Pon things as small and simple as a rose.
 Following with the young zest of a child,
 Some path of beauty that her thoughts beguiled.
 And while she oft hath scattered here and there
 Some bloom in pathways that were bleak and bare,
 I pray that flowers may glow with added grace,
 For her in that blest land near Christ's dear face.

IN MEMORIAM.

I think God lets us keep the hearts that love us,
These hearts of gold that show no base alloy,
Until He needs them in His plan of mercy,
To draw us onward, where some better joy

Than earthly love—albeit so sweet and tender,
That fills so long a space in heart and life,
Awaits our coming—past the pain and doubting,
Past chance of loss, and bitter tears and strife.

We are not robbed of all. When twilight shadows
Begin to lengthen and the day is done,
When soft pale tints come in the west horizon,
And tiny stars show shyly, one by one,

Almost we feel the warmth of soft hands stealing
Into the eager loving clasp of ours;
Hands that we kissed one day, and laid with weeping
All unresponsive 'neath the grass and flowers.

Almost we hear the clear low accents falling
In cadence sweet upon the listening air,
Or something 'gainst one's cheek 'tis sweet to fancy—
A floating perfumed tress of her dear hair.

The blessed comfort of her presence blending
With every breath we drew in that dear past,
Is ours again—if but one precious hour
O bitter grief—it may not, cannot last.

But on we plod—refreshed and helped and strength-
ened,
With yearning deeper, stronger than before—
Seeking to trace the path she trod, and groping
With longing hands, to find the open door.

A SUNBEAM.

God sent a sunbeam down to earth,
A little smiling baby girl.
A bit of heaven resting still in her blue eyes
Full of vague and questioning surprise,
Beneath the long dark lashes furled.

We ask for blossoms and our meed is rue,
Haply Heaven may have held a place,
Expecting her—nay who can tell?
We can but hope—we know that it is well.
The angels might have need of her sweet face,
To help the anthems ring more pure and true.

Our earthly sunbeams shine but one short day—
How brief a day our little sunbeam shed
Her light into our lives—then swiftly fled
To happier climes beyond our wild recall,
The shadows when she left—engulfing all,
Unlighted even by one faint small ray.

Nay not so—for the dear God hears
Our anguished prayer—he feels the ache
Of our weak human hearts that well nigh break.
If we but keep our face toward the light
We'll come to her at last—there is no night
Up there—and God shall wipe away all tears.

JUST THE LITTLE DAILY FRETS.

'Tis tiny cares that prick and goad
Our hearts, well nigh past healing
The little cruel word that stings,
To anguish past revealing.
Grief lifts us to her skyward perch
Beyond these frets and flurries,
There is no room on those lone heights
For trivial things or worries.

A little thing—a smile may make
May weather in December,
A hand clasp may, when dark days come,
Be something to remember.
The wicked gnomes whose tiny feet
Leave lines on hearts and faces,
Claim grim old Poverty for king
And bask in his good graces.

If we could only hold in leash
The small cares that torment us,
Our hearts could brave the wind and wave
Of stormier sorrows sent us.
These tiny things—inch at a time,
Tear down our soul's defences,
Till it is left, weak and bereft,
When Time's warfare commences.

Great sorrows steel our human hearts
'Gainst all less worthy foeman.
Put us upon our guard and make
Us better men and women.
'Tis just the little daily frets
That spoil life's bread and leaven,
And dull our senses to the taste
Of manna—sent from heaven!

REST.

In the evening, just at sunset,
When all the business of the day is done,
The small cares and petty worries
Which attend thereon are flown,
Leaving me with worn and weary spirit,
Languid step and often failing breath,
Indifferent, craving only simple rest,
Nor caring whether that be sleep, or death,

There looms ahead of me in the distance,
Compelling weary eyelids up from misty eyes,
No grand sweep of wooded hills and valleys,
No castle walls, nor deep Italian skies;

Only a gray old church spire rising
From the midst of dark green trees that nod
And nestle close around the dim old building,
Whose dumb finger ever points to God.

Not dumb, nor voiceless, for I listen
To the varied story—still the same,
Of the many it has pointed upward,
Till all my doubts are put to shame.
And as I gaze, the ruddy background
Fast fading, dies—and then there follows
A rare wide-spreading heaven of blue—
Against which fly the homeward swallows.

The blue grows bluer, and adown
The limitless space there gleams a star,
Just one alone, first shy and trembling—
As though afraid to venture down so far,
Then courage gains and slowly falters
Along the trackless waste, until at last
I watch it seem to hang just over,
The pointing church spire—fading fast.

Those two always seem to me
Connecting links between far heaven and earth,
The silent lesson they are teaching
Sinking deeper, gains an untold worth.
In my tired day dreams comes upon me
A hush and calm from all the world's alarms,
With the vision of the church spire pointing,
And the angel star outstretching tender arms.

LOST! A HEART.

Lost! A heart! in the hurry and whirl
Of living. I do not know when or how.
'Twas a heart of gold—though you might not think it.
It might seem to you like a common trinket,
Though I know its value—too late now.

Spite of its rough and rugged appearing,
Of all my treasures I loved it best,
Tho' I knew it not until I had missed it
Held its empty casket and sadly kissed it,
And searched for the lost heart east and west.

Strange how poor seem my other possessions,
How dull my jewels, how dim their shine,
Beside the mere memory of this one treasure
That I prize too late—beyond all measure—
This heart, that once was so wholly mine.

Do you think I might one day chance to find it?
The world is so wide—it is hard to say.
Even though it is wandering ever so far,
Surely my love is the beacon star
That will guide it homeward again some day.

Haply not until in the Hereafter
Where God's smile maketh all times day,
I shall find my lost heart, there safely treasured
Where thieves do not steal, and love is not measured,
And that we love best is our own alway.

LIFE'S GARMENT.

O garb of life, thou hast worn well,
And now thy listless drapery
Is falling from me.
'Tis well, old friend. I find
Many a threadbare place the years have left;
Much dust has settled deep upon thee—
Cast by the chariot wheels of happier mortals.
Thy hem once white as snows of Lebanon,
Hath not escaped a little touch of earth,
And so, because we two have borne
The heat and burden of the day together,
I'll fold thee tenderly, and place away,
Nor e'er forget thee in the whiter robe
Of immortality.

A CREED.

Yes all are dying—and some are dead,
And we who are left are firmly bound,
Our very souls to theirs are wed,
The souls whose bodies are underground,
And the very flowers we find abloom,
Over their still insensate dust,
In the soft depths of their innocent eyes
Cradle a promise we can but trust.

Though we may watch with dumb surprise
And pallid lips and stricken heart,
The flitting of life from pain-dulled eyes,
The last pale ray of life depart—
And though from the depths of a great despair,
The blank left by one missing face—
We writhe and cry and can hardly bear,
Our cross's touch on the galled place.

Yet if we have truly loved and well,
We—after a little with quiet tears
And twilight in our thoughts, can tell
Our hearts to be glad that the cruel years
Hold no more chances of grief and pain
For our precious dead—no murky days
Nor lagging of weary feet again,
Now set in God's serenest ways.

In all the years that have been ours,
(If they were many or were few,)
We yet have sown some fair thought-flowers,
Or simple, kindly deeds and true.
These ne'er shall know complete decay—
But bear their fruit the ages through,
Till time and thought have passed away,
And bloom around God's throne anew.

Crowned with the glory of sunset's gold,
Facing the light from the glowing west,
A yearning deep and pain untold
Awake from their slumber in our breast;

We stretch out our hands, so near we feel,
To our dearly loved who have gone before
Who are safe within the land o' the leal,
And freed from earth stains ever more.

And all of the beauty of earth and sky
Perfume of flowers, and colors rare,
Glory of sunlight and moon's soft calm,
Myriad wonders of sea and air—
With subtle, intangible, yet mighty chain,
Link our souls with the great "to come,"
And as surely we know we shall live again
As that all of Earth's homeless shall gather home.

FINISHED.

Fifty and five—all your letters,
Tidily bound and kept in place,
Just as they came and as I laid them
With friendly fingering—face to face.
Half—yes half of them came that summer,
After you first had said good-bye,
With your saddened eyes and face averted;
You cared for me then—I wonder why!

Life was none too glad that summer
And your love was all too sweet a balm
For heartache—and I think it deadened
The pain of remembrance to seeming calm.
The daily message quite o'erflowing
With "love divine and love alway,"
Voiced itself sweetly above life's discord
And banished the twilight, cold and gray.

After—how was it—I cannot remember,
Was it you or I who was most to blame;
Well I suppose it is not much matter,
And fifty years hence 'twill be all the same.
And so—the letters grew short and shorter,
And so we drifted a world apart,
Till now—I am sending you back your letters
Sending you letters and picture and heart.

Rather a bore you'll find it, *mon ami*,
Rereading the cast of a midsummer dream;
I hadn't the heart to stir up its ashes,
Of burned out love words. There isn't a gleam
Of warmth to be found in the chilly embers.
Once, but a breath would have fanned them ablaze.
It was so long ago—who quite remembers,
All one has felt in the bygone days?

These poor little scentless, faded posies
You gathered for me at Lover's Leap,
Look a mute reproach and crave indulgence;
But nay—I must not, cannot keep
A single relic of what once was
And is no more. To help forget
I shall leave you out of my life—and you
Being a man—will be happy yet!

A PARTING.

Where are you hastening, dear old year,
Unto what land are you bound so fast—
Cannot you bide a bit—why should you care,
To fade into one of those shadows vast?
Where you are going, is it always night,
Misty and vague and full of wraiths
Whose heavy eyelids would shun the light,
These piteous ghosts of murdered faiths.

Do the voices we never again will hear,
Echo for you in that wonderful land,
If they send us a message, those loved and dear,
Do you think we will know and understand?
You are taking a part of ourselves with you
That none of us more may claim as ours,
And you for our rosemary give us rue,
A sere brown leaf—for flowers.

Have you a place in that land of yours
(O unkind year, how you haste to go!)
Where you may cherish and guard the stores
Of treasure you've watched and tended so?

Add then broken dreams unnumbered,
Beauteous loves now slain and cold,
Dead hopes, high aims, all dust encumbered,
And fair ambitions damp with mould.

You may keep them for us until hereafter,
Sometime, somewhere we shall want our own,
When sad lips learn the way to laughter,
And grieved wet eyes shall be unknown,
We shall claim these broken, battered toys,
You have glorified and made complete;
Good-night—good-bye—to all thy joys,
Some pain we keep for bittersweet!

NO HURRYLAND.

I have heard of a land in some far distance
Leagues upon leagues from the one we know,
Where the sternest of duties know no insistence,
Whose people live out a blessed existence,
Unimpelled by the forces that hasten *us* so.

Nobody there seems to be in a hurry,
Leisure's a birthright each may possess,
It is so very quiet, such absence of flurry
Of all the small things that make up a worry,
And the feverish striving after success.

They say that one's pulse beat is as quiet as sleeping
In this place I have heard of, an infinite calm.
No hot high tide thro' one's veins goes leaping,
Out thrusting all peaceful thoughts and sweeping
A volume of discord thro' life's sweet psalm.

It must be so dear—the soft relaxing
Of the strained wild tension of heart and brain,
That life has always been overtaking,
Thro' long years—and that now are waxing
Dull to the constant prick of pain.

Who would not live over there if they could
Who ever has lived in the land we know,
But they say that only one who has stood
Close to the flagstaff of God and of good—
Ever can manage to go.

SOON.

Sometimes—amid the fret and tumult
Of daily living—comes the blest belief,
Falling on our restless fevered spirits
With a sense of soothing and relief,
The swift, sure, lightning-like conviction
That comes to bless us when the world goes wrong,
When minor tones come slowly, surely creeping
Through life's divinest song.

'Tis this—thank God life has its limit.
Pain and anguish do their work at last,
Some day soon, the struggle will be ended,
All the sorrow and the heartache past,
A rest for wayworn feet and tired hands,
For hearts grown bitter with the hateful strife,
And souls that bruise their restless wings against
The prison bars of life.

Were there no Heaven, even the surcease
Of earth's torments in that quiet spot
They call the grave, would still be rest and peace,
Where we and all our cares are soon forgot.
Then, Oh weak heart, uplift thy fallen courage
To those calm heights thy soul would gain,
Nor pause, nor backward look, but clasping close
The hand of angel Pain.

DESPAIR.

Despair! I know her well,
She and I are ancient comrades;
Many's the time she's sat upon my hearth
And watched with me the firelight
Flicker on the walls, and tiptoe past
The shadowy uncertain corners
Where mocking ghosts of memory
Hold high carnival.
Many's the time, I say—that she has laid

Her icy hand upon my heart,
 Compelling my unwilling gaze to dwell
 Upon her haggard face and awful eyes
 Until I felt myself grow like to her in feature.
 Once a beauteous joy was mine.
 Scarce had she folded her white wings
 Ere my grim comrade's face,
 In hideous contrast to the other's plaintive grace,
 Frightened the angel guest away,
 Never to come again.
 Despair still lingers—still keep's watch
 Beside my hearth till it is cold and gray
 As her own face—nor have I power
 To bid my ancient comrade go or stay.

TWO WISHES.

Caro mio! just how fair the world is,
 Those leaving it alone can tell.
 Leaving it for vague and unknown regions,
 In unexplored new lands to dwell.
 You know well my childish fondness
 For roses, roses deep and glowing red;
 Well dear, just to please my fancy,
 After I am still and cold and dead

Bring me a crimson bunch, all dewy sweet,
 Just as many as my pale hands will hold.
 How often we have walked with lagging feet
 In the old rose garden—damp with mould;
 They and I are friends, they will not shrink
 To share with me death's long dark dream;
 Their passionate bright beauty will, I think
 Make even the grave's dread silence seem
 Less awful, until by the time
 They shall have withered on my marble breast
 I will have grown accustomed to the gloom,
 May even like the silence, and the rest.
 Nay, do not chide—I shall not go
 Till some appointed time—we may not part.
 So—let me laugh—and wear my roses so,
 Just above the strong loud beating of my heart.

* * * * *

Hush dear—I am so tired—do not weep—
It is so good to rest—the way was long
And dreary, and I fain would sleep
Away from noise and strife and wrong;
And when 'tis over bring me roses white.
And place above the heart that fretted so:
I fancy that their snowy whiteness might
Cool the fever that throbbed to and fro.

We are done forever with life's gold and red—
My heart and I—well nigh safely passed
Out of the glow and glare and clash of metal
Into the twilight, grand and calm and vast:
No withering heats of noon will ever beat
Upon us, heart of mine, and roses white.
Only a soft pale radiance, restful, sweet,
Within the land where there can be no night.

FRUITION.

Just the dropping of the acorns one by one
Or in soft showers of friendly twos and threes,
So silently they fall; the yellow shining sun
Turns them all to fairy gold.
Some between the rocks—some well nigh hid
'Neath grass and rank green undergrowth,
Their quiet home, till they are bid
Their task to enter on. And from the earth
Where they have nestled close and warm
They take a new bright life—another birth,
And soon reach up a brawny sturdy arm
Toward the sky—whence it receives
All sweet good gifts of rain and sun and dew:
There the birds build nests, the mosses weave,
The joyous sunshine struggles through
Its ample boughs. Later on
When youth is past and gray old age
Silvers its gnarled trunk, and strips the green
And glory from its branches, wild winds wage
A fierce mad war, and lightning's vivid sheen
Plays with a startling splendor all among
Its bare gray arms—reached with piteous patience
Toward the far off heavens.

And now its mission is fulfilled;
Upon the fire the huge oak logs
Yield a grateful warmth and crimson glow,
That lights the faces gathered all around
The cheery hearth. Some are speaking,
Some smiling listen—other some
Choose silence, and with the mantle
Of introspection wrapped about them,
See past the ashes white—far beyond
The live red embers' fiery glow,
Dreaming their dreams.

POVERTY.

They call you rich—you!
Whose sated eyes have grown
Weary of the brilliance and the bloom
Of costly art:
Eyes that forget to raise their languid lids,
To gaze upon the exquisite tints
Of gorgeous sunset skies.
They call me poor, and yet in truth
I would not give the joy that's mine,
As silently I make my own
The beauty of God's radiant skies,
For all your works of art—your gold,
Your table—nay your whole grand house
Is one bright place of hot-house bloom,
And scarce one blossom wins a passing glance;
While I can dream a whole rose garden,
Over one tiny fragrant bud.
You lavish princely sums for naught—
And sadly bored—endure
The harmony you scarcely hear.
And I—my weary heart stands still;
Once more I am a child and heaven is near,
My being all absorbed—heart, soul and will,
By just one wild pathetic strain.
Besides—you are alone—so poor,
For all your wealth can never buy
The little hand that nestles close in mine,
Your brilliant jewels dim and pale beside
The lovelight shining in her soft deep eyes.

Nay they are wrong, my friend: 'tis I—
Am rich beyond compare.
Your home is like your heart—
Cold, desolate and bare.

JOYS.

The passionate deep joys of life
Descend upon our souls like forest fires
Sweeping all else before them.
There is a flash, a crimson blaze of glory,
A fierce mad power that claims
All that comes within its radius, until
Bereft of fuel. After?
What then? why after flame—we know
There's ashes.
And nothing in this world can be so cold
As the ashes of a burned out joy.

It is the small tame joys that grow
Thick as spring violets around our feet,
That make life tolerable.
And like that modest flower that hides
Its blue sweet eyes, and would be sought,
So with these bashful joys of ours
That wait the plucking.
Oh, dullards that we are.
Our careless feet still crush
The blossoms we are still too blind
To make our own.

GRANDMOTHER.

Past all the sunshine and laughter,
Past the green and the rose bordered path,
And now in the gathering twilight,
Finding rosemary and aftermath.
Her other self—prop and partner
Of sunny and shadowy years,
Has laid down his burdens and left her,
With her poor dim eyes full of tears.

Not long will she linger behind him ;
Faltering the footstep and slow,
Each day the hand is more aimless,
And the poor shaking head white as snow
Droops nearer and nearer the daisies
That soon o'er its pallor will rest,
And over the worn aged fingers,
Crossed peacefully on the still breast.

And some day soon—childish fingers
As hers were once, long ago,
Will over the *two* mounds scatter
Fresh flower buds to and fro,
And letting their tears' gentle shower
Fall upon Grandmother's grave,
Will leave her to peace and to quiet,
Where the long spikes of grasses wave.

NATURE'S VOICES.

How strong they are, those silent forces,
That war with hate and time and wrong,
How loud and clear, and angel-like the voices
That sing creation's song.
So mother-like the touch of Nature's fingers
On spirits dulled with grief,
So willingly she shares our heaviest burdens,
And gives relief.

The dew of love and pity falls on weary spirit
With infinite wide reaching balm,
From starry skies that stretch so far above us
In endless calm.
How near we draw to the beloved who left us,
And how our yearning hands outreach
Toward their home beyond the sunset glory—
More fair than speech.

They seem so poor and pale, these human sorrows,
Beside the ebb and flow of ocean's tide.
That bears them outward on the waste of waters,
So vast and wide.

And the beating of the great heart 'gainst its prison
Muffles the loud impatient throb of ours,
Heart and ocean tide alike obeying
The higher powers.

Dawn of day with its pale pink flushes,
And tender hints of later gold and blue,
Brings back to us a breath of childish gladness
When life was true.
The young grass waving in the yellow splendor,
Of early sunshine—the look it wears,
We knew as children, ere grief had come,
Or weariness and cares.

The stars in their serene and tender shining
Look down upon us with the loving eyes
Of all the purest joys we ever knew.
Beyond them lies
A subtle something we have never found,
Though its poor counterfeit so real seems,
And its pale spirit presence comes to us
Sometimes in dreams.

A DEAD HOPE.

Tread softly when you reach that sunless region,
Deep in my heart,
Which hides, from thoughts whose name is Legion,
A thing apart.

Tread soft—'tis true the dead sleep soundly—
From dreams quite free,
Yet sleep my beauteous dead ne'er so profoundly,
I'd have you be

Gentle indeed, when you draw near that pallid presence,
And lift the sheet,
To look upon the passionless dead face of her
Who made life sweet.

And if you start in awe at the unearthly beauty
Of that dead face,
Think what it must have been while life yet lent it
Bewildering grace!

Think of the eyes—whose tender steady shining
Soothed pain to rest,
The voice, whose music drowned life's harshest discords
Within my breast;

The strange glad smile, that turned into day
All shadowy places
Whose mere reflection loaned a brighter beauty
To other faces.

The subtle sweet thrill that passed thro' all my being
And yet lingers,
That once was mine thro' the mere magic touch
Of these marble fingers.

Too late for tears, and yet a blest faith whispers
That in a brighter land
Haply I'll find my one sweet hope, that perished
By your own hand.

IN MEMORIAM.

If human love could thwart the thorns that cruel
Spring to wound the little careless feet,
Could choose the richest setting for our jewel,
Could make all living blest and full and sweet,—

Then might we beg, in grief's wild hopeless weeping,
For their return back to our empty arms,
To safely hold them in that dear close keeping.
Shut well away from all the world's alarms.

* * * * *

We fold the arms bereft over the heart's wild aching,
Hiding the broken playthings out of sight,
And wet eyed gaze toward the light that's breaking
In that dear land where there comes no night.

IN MEMORIAM.

The fevered fret of life must be
Better worth the while, if when we lie
Low and prone beneath the grass and sky
We know that grateful hearts will ache,
And hot tears of regret fall, for our sake,
And Nature takes us, weary, to her breast—
The winds will sigh—a good man
Let him rest.

IN MEMORIAM.

Life drew a curtain close before her eyes,
Leaving her in the dark—but when,
Death, more kind, passed by—he paused
And with soft reverent touch removed
The pall—and led her to the light,
That never shines on land or sea.

IN MEMORIAM.

One finds perhaps in lapse of many years
Some few tried souls who know no change,
Whom nothing in this cold world can estrange,
Who are firm in lofty strength of self-control,
Unmoved by tempests that may near them roll.
They do not die—our very tears
That fall as gentle tribute to their worth,
The strange sad place they left a blank on earth,
All speak of them in silence more than speech,
When they have passed beyond our yearning reach.

EPITAPH.

A simple faith was hers, that gave
Its whole sweet strength, and grew with giving;
A soul so true and pure and brave
Passed far beyond your portals, grave,
Into the realms of truest living.

IN MEMORIAM.

Grim Death making sure his aim,
Sends his keen unerring dart
Straight home to a strong human heart,
Like this—leaving the stricken frame
To show how he could find his mark—
At morn, high noon or in the dark;
Yet round the cold and vanquished brow
The victor's wreath of laurel now
Is twined. For death has met defeat,
In that last smile, passing sweet.

AN OLD LETTER.

How long it has lain—hidden away,
Far from sight and sound of day—
Nestled away by chance I think
Down in the dark—this faded link
Between bright youth and middle age,
Youth that is now a turned down page.

I did not think I could be so stirred
Again by written or spoken word,
But here—after so many changeful years,
How is it—can it be—yes, tears;
They do not ease the old heartache,
Holding its own asleep or awake.

A woman's whole pure heart laid bare
Upon this page—while here and there
A sweet reserve makes valiant fight,
But further on is vanquished quite,
As she pens the tender words of love;
Ah! can it be that heaven above

Sees and pities our rash mistakes,
Sorrows over our poor heart breaks?
Do our guardian angels leave our side
The while the cruel Demon Pride
Grasps our hearts in his fiery hold
And burns them to ashes gray and cold.

Our own hands summon the minor tone
That thrills thro' life like a piteous moan;
Our own hands strike the note of strife
That mars the harmony of life—
And only Beyond—will a master hand
Restore the lost melody full and grand.

TWO PICTURES.

Paint me an apple tree crowded with blooms
And 'neath it—uplifting two round arms bare
To the wealth of blooms not half so fair
As the white hand thrust 'mid their perfume,
Paint a young girl with an angel's face,
Soft brown hair with a hint of gold
Slumbering in every braid and fold,
Crowning her queen of youth and grace.

Give her deep sweet eyes of darkest blue,
"Lake Constance" eyes—with the sunny light
Of a noble nature strong and bright
Shining steadily through and through,
Give her oval cheeks the delicate tint
Of the sky as it flushes at dawn of day;
But ere you touch the mouth—I pray,
Painter—try you hard to imprint

My words on your memory's safest cell.
The red curved lips must be full of pride,

And yet not overmuch to hide
The gracious sweetness I know well;
The subtle something but half-revealed
By the beautiful lips of the pictured face,
Lends it an almost pathetic grace
Fairer than human speech can tell.

* * * * *

Paint me a face that is older and wiser,
The face that is now the girl's over there,
Leave out the youth but make it fair,
Place lines where dimples once reigned supreme,
Put thought into eyes that once held a dream,
Take a little, for Time, from the oval cheek,
And—to the lips just ready to speak
Give a fainter red—but you must pay
Back what you have taken away
A hundred fold. Make a saintly face,
With naught of earthiness—not a trace.

Use your best skill on the steadfast eyes
Pure as a child's—as tender and wise.
Let a beautiful life show thro' the face,
Let each sad hour if you choose—keep pace,
And accent itself in her silvering hair.
But then do you think you can gather there,
The blessings of living and some long dead,
And weave in a crown for the shining hair?
Ah Painter! I see your brush falls back,
And the hand that held it is all too slack.
Greater than you have failed, I ween,
To picture the essence of things not seen;
But two portraits live in my heart away
As I knew her then—and again to-day.

RAN'S STORY.

Good evenin' Miss Sanders; don't worry,
I can't stop barely a minute,
You heard 'bout Cal and his wife separatin';
Didn't think there was nothin' in it?
Yes there was. If you insist ma'am
I'll take a cup o' warm tea
An' tell you the whole o' the trouble,
The same as Miranda told me.

You know Ran's been with the young folks
Ever since Cal was married to Rose,
An' she says in all these years
They'd never a hard word—as *she* knows.
Cal was proud as a man could be,
Of Rose's beauty an' goodness an' grace;
He fairly worshipped the very sun
That shone on her sweet face.

Well—last March it was—one evenin',
The master'd been gone all day,
An' Rose was softly playin'
Some strange old tunes, in a way
She often had in the twilight.
Ran comin' to light the lamp
Saw a man walk in the low window,
An' first she thought 'twas a tramp.

Saw him swiftly reach the piano,
An' clasp Rose in his arms,
An' she not knowin' her brother
Jumped back with a scream and start.
But she knew him, just in a minute,
Her playmate of years ago;
Her husband had never seen him.
Accordin' it turned out so

That comin' home, he should see 'em
Settin' so lovin'ly there
In the cheery glow o' the firelight,
An' she so wonderful fair.

He made no sign, but turning,
 Quietly went his own way,
 An' only one letter he wrote her,
 From then to this very day.

Ran didn't know what he wrote,
 But she drooped—day in day out,
 Till she wore away most to a shadder,
 An' she never was very stout.
 Some folks said they were parted,
 Or that business had called him off—
 But nobody ever blamed her,
 And nobody dared to scoff.

* * * *

To-night when Ran cooked supper,
 An' goin' to tell her Miss Rose.
 Found the master, who was saying,
 "I have suffered, love—God knows."
 An' his wife—her big eyes shinin'
 Out of her pale little face,
 Put her arms round his neck, an' her head
 On his breast—its rightful place.

An' Ran told me all about it,
 The worry an' sorrow an' trouble,
 An' long before she had finished,
 I'm fraid I began to "see double."
 No more tea Miss Sanders—thankee,
 Nor muffins—tho' yours is the best
 To be had in the town—I take it,
 No more—'deed ma'am, I protest.

FRIENDS.

You pity me, my friend, in this strange land
 So many hundred leagues across the sea,
 Far from the clasp of any friendly hand,
 And light of eyes, that once have smiled on me.
 Yet even here, the yellow sunset splendor
 Lingers as fondly on these foreign trees,
 That reach up skyward, dark and straight and slender,
 With soft faint sighs for every passing breeze.

I find the same dear stars at night above me
In their accustomed places, in the waste of blue,
And fancy, as of old, that those who love me
Are thinking of me still with hearts as true.
The fleeting perfect glory of the sunset skies
Brings back a host of memories to soften,
And tears unbidden to my unwilling eyes,
Remembering silent voices once heard often.

The pale blue morning glory round which hovers
The romance and the freshness of my youth
Smiles up at me with eyes of real lovers,
Eyes full of innocence and truth;
The distant sail across the world of waters,
A glint of gold green marsh grass nearer shore,
And I am wrapped in dreams as sweet and real
As life was in the days that come no more.

You see my friends are legion; can you pity
Me, now that you understand at last
How these, my comrades in this queer old city,
Help me to live again the happy past?
Nay then, not ever homesick nor forsaken,
With the bright blue sky at noon and stars by night,
When dawn restores more than the dark has taken,
Ushering in some new and fresh delight.

GOOD-BYE.

No faith in human kind—and why so, pray?
Is it because one does not care to gauge
The depths of life's divinest needs, my friend,
By your own line, and measure off the world
By your small rule? Bah! I had thought
Better things of you than this most pale
And puny sentiment, devoid
Of even common justice. May I not turn
To right and you to left,
Paths wide diverging, which yet some day,
May meet each other and be lost
In one broad free highway?
Do you not see that I must loose

Your hand if I would go my chosen way,
For mine is narrow, and the path is not
Edged with tender-hued forget-me-not,
But cruel thorns are there, and burning sand
And stones to wound unwary feet:
Surging up in hungry waves I see
Marah's bitter waters climbing high,
Waters thro' which, shuddering, I
Must pass—for straight they flow
Across the way that I must go
To reach my shining goal.
Who knows—you may be right, my friend,
Yet my own way is best for me,
And yours for you.
Then good-bye, dear, an' dost thou let
Thy hand leave lingering touch of mine,
In dreary, listless, quite forsaken way.
Nay—there's much yet left for you,
I keep you still in sight,
Tho' palms may not touch evermore
Until our two paths meet
Upon the Broad Highway.

THAT DAY.

When, in some uncertain far off future,
Or mayhap a still nearer present,
There comes a day when I shall say,
"Dear World, bid me good-bye."
No matter when the time, if far or near,
I shall not turn regretful hands
Earthward—but in very truth,
Accept the summons as I have this life,
Its haltings in the burning noonday sun,
Its sudden forced marches, and the storms
From which there seems to be no shelter.
And yet—ah that sweet "yet,"
How keenly I recall the rests
In grassy meadows, and the beauty
Of the bits of color here and there!
After the storm had passed,
All the unearthly fairness held
Within a thousand glowing sunsets.

Not if I could would I forget
The brambles and the stones that bruised
My feet so often on the way.
The angel Pain is linked forever
With her dear sister—Joy; and so
I knew the one so well, the shadow
Of the other rested on my heart.
From my blest stronghold do I gaze
With wondering pity 'pon a world
So blind to life's serenest ways;
Not till the death day shall I wait,
And groping backward strive to find
The lost bright threads of joy
I should have woven in life's gloom and night.
I can count up each separate gleam
Of sunshine I might claim, and basked
Within its light. Drained my cup
And minded not the little bitter drop,
Indeed well nigh forgot 'twas there.

HER LAST LETTER.

Dear Jo :—(Can I ever forget
The short familiar old name?)
I write this now to inform you
(I declare it's a downright shame,)
I write just as Pa has told me,
In so many short spoken words,
And not as I would unbidden,
Were I free as the wild wood birds.

He says, Jo, that you "are no partner
For a girl who has just received
An offer from almost a nabob,
And who, if report be believed,
Owns enough to buy us and sell us
Over and over again,"
And who's fallen a victim, so *he* says,
(I wonder his honor could deign,)
To the eyes you have likened to sloes, Jo,
And the curls that were once your pride,
With sublime disregard of "position,"
Proposes to make me his bride.

“Of course I refuse?”—well—no—Jo,
Now don’t threaten to go to the bad
Because there’s no help for it now, Jo,
And—poverty is dreadfully sad,
You know, Jo, ’tis none of my doing,
Pa has it all his own way,
While I’m to be properly grateful
And have little or nothing to say.
Try to utter your ‘Kismet’ with grace, Jo,
Now that our vow ’neath the stars
Is annulled by the Diamond Order—
Or rather—an order of Pa’s!

IN MEMORIAM.

Brick by brick—piece by piece,
The fair old church is being shattered,
Every nook and corner consecrated
By a long and loving service
Of hymns to God. And others—
Dirges full of tears around the biers
Of our loved ones, borne away forever,
The last sad prayers in hushed presence
Of our dear unheeding dead;
Its walls, yet echoing with the sweet
Vibration of the joyful wedding marches
They have listened to in times now past—
Are rudely shaken down, letting in
God’s sunlight on the floor
Where many hundred footsteps passed,
Bringing sorrow, wild rebellion, grief
And loss, leaving all save peace and calm
There beneath the cross.

And from round the overthrown tower
Where nevermore will sound the call to prayer,
They push away with harsh unpitying fingers
The ivy’s clinging hands—poor things,
They reach out blindly, in a helpless search
For that support they no more will find,
Even on the breast of Mother Earth.
In a little while the old church lives

No more save in the dreams
And tender memory of some mother
Whose little one was carried to its rest,
Across that threshold; or some matron
Whose wifely vows were spoken there.
Or mayhap some heart, more gentle
Than the rest, will give the ivy clad—
Unshattered vision—a lasting home
Within its tender thoughts forsake
Of just one touching hymn,
Or prayer inspired, that waked
Ere it was called too late—
One sleeping soul—sleeping
In the watches of the night.

FROM THE CAR WINDOW.

With a freshening speed around the curve
Swept the long dark living thing aswerve.
Just then it was—there came in view
A long, low farm house, shining through
The Springtime green of many trees
Swaying lightly in the breeze;
In the open door stood a little child,
“Of such is the Kingdom—undefiled.”

The little one's glory of yellow hair
Curled softly around her forehead fair,
The sunny blue of her shining eyes
Matched well the April morning skies,
The small mouth parted in tender smile
Haunted me many a weary mile;
This I saw as the train passed by,
And after—all day wondered why

The vision of her baby grace,
The exquisite smile on her tiny face,
The careless clasp of her dimpled hands
(I can almost see her as she stands,)
Should haunt my dreary business den,
Checking my always ready pen,
And somehow my thoughts go wandering back
Over memory's limitless track

As I search for a clue, and not in vain,
Why the little one's face brings a thrill, half-pain,
Half subtle sweet dreams of a beautiful past
That was perfect, alas—and might not last,
Of a love who was only a pretty child,
And tho' so loving—not angel mild,
Passion-rocked as the ruby rose,
Yet gentle to all human woes;

Of a parting in anger and bitterest strife,
And a long grey stretch of soulless life
Wherein *her* tender face was not;
Then the coming back to a grassy spot
They called her grave—beside which—I,
Kneeling—cry out—peccavi!
All too late, the while my tears
Fall like rain, and all the years

Move backward, as again I see
Her as she used to come to me
When I was vexed with her childish way;
Come with a face like dawn of day,
And her dazzling slow sweet wondrous smile,
Blue eyes ashine that could beguile
The flintiest human heart.

So like—so like was the baby face,
It had found a safe and tender place
Within my thought—and the rosy mouth,
Gentle as zephyrs wandering south,
Seems to whisper “see, beyond,
In the Aiden true and fond
Thou shalt find thy treasure lost,
Sweetest saint in white robed host.”

ONE HEART.

Some hearts there are, that never seem to hold
A single shadowy place where love's sweet shine
May not make warmth and light of dark and cold,
And leave a touch of youth upon the old,
O rare, sweet love, akin to the divine.

A heart like this was hers; such love shone through
The clearness of her eyes unshadowed light,
Wherein were cradled gentle thoughts that knew
A tenderness for all things weak and all things true,
And loving humanly—grew near to God and right.

O ye who grieve and miss her from her place,
'Tis something to have known if but awhile
A soul like hers, whose simple childlike grace
Banished the twilight shades from every face,
Giving without stint the sunshine of her smile.

And though ye still with misty tear-dimmed eyes
Shall strew the roses over her dear dust,
She leaning o'er the parapets of paradise,
Sends you a message down from God's clear skies;
Be patient, bide thy time, dear heart—and trust.

LIVING AND LOVING.

It isn't life's purple and gold, dear,
That makes it best worth living,
Not always the very costliest gifts,
Are dearest and best worth giving.
The heart that beats in truest time
With the music of creation,
Is happier far than his whose will,
Can make or mar a nation.

The little sunny gleams that prove,
Our dark clouds' hopeful lining,
Are brighter, dear, than if we had
Walked always in the shining.
I do not think God loves us less,
Or frowns on us hereafter,
Because we cover up a sigh,
With single hearted laughter.

There is no heart so poor, but gives
If it but will, a treasure
Richer than any kings may own,
Greater than time can measure.

No life can e'er be poor or cold,
Or craving some new blessing,
That hath and holdeth fairy gold,
Love's gracious self possessing.

Love soundeth depths that none may reach
With any common plummet,
It leadeth up to heights beyond
This work-a-day life's summit.
A little tender human love
Just at the right time given,
Goes far to make this sad old earth
Seem like a bit of heaven.

SLUMBER.

We call them dead, the giants of our youth,
Love, Ambition, Pride.
We gave them decent burial in sooth
As each one died.

Yet, though for years the grasses may have grown
Green upon their graves,
And we have left them cold and still and lone,
Where night winds rave.

Still, though we may own it not, their ghosts arise
Unasked and undesired,
To bring the past back with their haunting eyes,
With life unfired.

A touch of tenderness, a low caressing word,
Fills every vein,
With much the same wild foolish bliss that stirred
The old sweet pain.

A breath of praise, a little triumph, sets us dreaming
Of plans left unfulfilled,
And once again our eager thoughts are teeming
With hopes once stilled.

A word, a look, and ghostly pride ariseth,
Where he has lain
Within his grave, and in his might surpriseth
Our hearts to pain.

Our old selves do not die, they only slumber,
And mother nature knows
'Tis hers to waken them times out of number,
Or leave them to repose.

THAT SAME JO.

He asked me if I'd have him,
An' I pint'ly told him "no.
An' what's more, that I wouldn't
If I *never* had a bo."
But he wasn't noways flustered
Was that young fellow Jo.

He kept on comin' reg'lar
As any ither bo,
Till I right up an' tol' him
I wished that he would go.
But he didn't 'pear to mind it,
Did that long, lanky Jo.

He said he'd "keep on askin'
A time o' two a year,
Till ever I got married!"
I said I didn't care,
He'd nagged and worried so,
Had that young fellow Jo!

Jus' how to end the thing,
I 'clare I didn't know—
Noways but jus' to marry.
An' so I did—but sho',
The man that put the ring on
Was that same fellow, Jo!

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

O guardian angel; what your mission is
I know not—were it but this,
To place the seal of thy firm finger-tips
Upon the passion of our human lips—
To stem the tide of hasty, careless speech
That places happiness beyond our reach,
And ruling the sunshine of love's presence out
Fills up the aching void with pain and doubt,
I say your mission would not be in vain.
With us so guarded—all would be well again.

OVER THE BORDER.

What does it matter if all day long
The skies are gray and cold winds grieve;
Minor tones creep thro' the gayest song,
And one plan goes right where ten go wrong,
When darkness brings a reprieve!

Over the border between sleep and waking
There's a beautiful realm where I fain would be,
Where friendship and love know no forsaking,
And no unkind fate is forever taking
Some joy that was all in all to me.

As soon as I pass into that land of wonder,
My daytime comrade until I shall die
—Care—who puts Joy and me asunder,
And diggeth his grave the dark earth under,
Looses my hand and says "good-bye."

The two twin angels, Grief and Pain,
And their gaunt dread sister, dark Despair,
That have tuned my life to their own refrain
And who bide with me thro' sun and rain—
Never can go with me there.

I bask in the light of my loved ones' faces
Over the border—in that sunny land,
And life grows young in their gentle graces;
There are no waste or desert places
Where I and another go hand in hand.

It is hard to come back to the world of striving,
To hearts that never can understand.
Where ne'er a sweet word is thought worth giving—
But I say to my heart—"we shall soon be living
In that sunshiny place—on the border land."

SWEET WORDS.

All that day and for many days thereafter
I heard a rhythmic chorus rise and fall,
A chorus sweet of strange unearthly voices,
And the beating of my heart kept time thro' all.
The song was wordless but I did not care,
Its perfect sweet melody was enough for me,
All my future living seemed changed and fair
Attuned to that angel chorus free.

Soft as the murmuring of far off seas,
Whispering deep songs of praise to God,
Or as some loving summer breeze
That comes and passes o'er the sod
Where our unforgotten dear ones sleep,
Rippling the long grass o'er each quiet breast
And softly sighing—on its way doth keep
Toward the sunset's golden rest.

Much I wondered who the fair musicians,
Vainly did I long to see one face,
Up and down I went with hope to find them,
Searching as I thought, in every place.
But after, being weary and disheartened
Opening the inner door that guards my soul,
I found the joyous prisoned singers,
And round about me did their music roll.

Would you then know their name and country,
Whence they came—what heavenly clime?

Sweet words—all glad with faith,
Straight from a generous heart to mine,
Came and bade me look ever skyward,
Unheeding stumbling feet, and fears that clog,
One hand in God's—the other free to battle
With giant shapes that rise in earthly fog.

Crush and put aside the poor ambitions
That swarm like bees around unwary lives,
Rule out the leaven and replace it
With something purer—he who strives
Always towards the heights, nor turns aside
Faltering from steep—must needs win
The fairer level where 'tis always day
And fruitions of best hopes are garnered in.

BROKEN, A PROMISE!

Broken, a promise, and nobody knows
Just how to mend it; do you suppose
There is such a place past the western bars,
Beyond the glimmer of nightly stars,
Where God has a workshop for mending things
Like broken promises—of men and kings.

It must be a busy place up there,
That workshop—miles thro' the sunny air;
Just think of the things God has to mend,
And the angels too—I think they lend
A helping hand—there's so much work,
That nobody there has time to shirk.

There are crooked things to be straightened too
That grew so here, why—nobody knew.
The lives that were gloomy and sad and wrong,
That should have been only one soft clear song,
Lives that grew crooked instead of straight,
And love that somehow came to be hate.

And when one thinks with a sigh of pain,
What trouble it must be to make whole again
The millions of promises broken since then,
When the world was young—by its countless men,
We promise ourselves and heaven too,
Not to give the angels so much to do.

GOOD-BYE.

'Tis hard to say good-bye to dear old friends
We'd like to journey with to earth's far ends,
Who have trod our path in sunshine and in rain,
Joined in our laughs and suffered with our pain
And friendly paths that long run side by side,
Forget that miles of space can soon divide,
But good-byes tremble in the smiling eyes
Of all our joys—on wing for Paradise.

So with the heartaches—they go too,
Yet there is scarce good-bye, but just adieu,
And nothing in our world but soon is past;
No joy, no anguish, nothing here can last,
Thou too, dear year, thy smiles, hopes, fears,
Thy bright glad days of shine, thy nights of tears,
The brokenhearted prayers that came to naught,
The wild sweet key-note of some grief-chord caught.

We'll say good-bye then brightly as we may,
With hope of meeting thee in some far day
When we may look thee frankly in the face,
Blessed with a better and a happier grace.
A hand clasp, an embrace, and all is o'er,
An empty space where thou hast stood before,
A faint sweet something as of roses' fragrant dust,
And in thy place a message—"wait and trust."

HOW TO MEASURE A MAN.

To measure a man, you needs must go
Down to the heart of things, you know;
You must go over every inch of ground
He calls his past—across and around,
You must mark his fight with giant sin,
And know which will the victory win,
And know defeat must often be
The great high road to victory.

You may not measure by one deed,
Or you will deal him unjust meed ;
All of his acts both great and small
Must measure together, or not at all,
If you cannot do this with your measuring rod,
You had best just leave it all to God.

LAND O' THE LEAL.

Beyond—in the distance dim, unreal—
Away from the beautiful false world,
Faith points us out the land o' the leal,
Where Pain's purple banner is furled.
There, we are told, no dream of sadness
Nor tears ever enter in,
Unquiet, nor passion, nor madness,
That belong to the world of sin.

None of the dross and dread alloy,
That dim our fairy gold here—
No sorrow to balance each separate joy,
No deadly sickening fear.
Hearing the sorrowful "learn to wait,"
Never again on the beautiful shore—
Neither the pitiful chill "too late"
Heard so often here before.

Nothing of heart-sick life-in-death,
Hand clasp given in long farewell,
Sadder than watching the failing breath
Preceding the sound of funeral bells.
Yea—sadder to pass away forever,
Out of the lives with ours wov'n in,
And feel no future wild endeavor
Will place us where we once have been.

The place we once did hold—yea,
And held right royally our own
E'er Fate did step between and say
Uncrown, thou leavest now thy throne—

And in the Kingdom of thy reign
The hearts of those who loved thee well,
Comes now a new and bright refrain,
E'en sadder this than funeral bell.

God of the beautiful and the true,
Tender and pitiful wilt thou be;
The perfect ones are scant and few,
Some, groping blindly cannot see—
For tears, the home of the satisfied
Beyond the sunset's gold, and feel
Their rest at hand—across the tide,
Within the land o' the leal.

A DEAD SUMMER.

Are you sure she sleeps and will not waken?
I've seen them lie just so, times past,
And sudden rise to bright triumphant glory,
When we were sure each death throe was the last;
Well, she has died hard, and each struggle
Brings back the thought of all the joy
She folds away in her dead arms forever—
Ere it has mingled with the world's alloy.

Haply she's dead—'tis hard to think so,
When on her perfect face there rests a smile
So full of love and life and laughter,
One would think she played at sleep the while;
And then the roseate fingers lightly clasping
Late roses red as wine, have yet
Retained their lovely pink and white perfection,
Nor paid to death its ghastly pallid debt.

Her dewy lips still hold the pink of coral,
And ready seem to overflow with laughter
As in the brilliant days when life was joy
And love the dream she followed after;
Just beneath the fringed lids resting,
Like daysprings hidden in some shaded nook,
The wells of her clear eyes—I wonder
If in her day dreams they had not that look.

Well, if you're sure she sleeps, to waken
No more in likeness quite the same again,
I'll leave within her coffin all my treasures
She helped me gather—but I keep the pain,
A dear and bitter-sweet remembrance
Culled from the kiss left on her dead face,
Upon which rests no dark and dreary shadow
And where grim death has left no single trace.

FIRE PICTURES.

Gazing into the fire,
Wrapped in a dreamy mood,
Watching the flames climb higher,
Caressing the logs of wood,
I fashion my eager dreaming
To the wayward turn of the blaze,
Conjuring happy visions
Of bygone things and days.

As my Castle in Spain rises skyward
With its glittering minarets fair,
I gloat o'er its wondrous beauty,
Outlined 'gainst the sunny air.
All my fair domain is peopled
With those whom my soul holds dear,
And the echo of their voices,
Is the sweetest music there.

I look into eyes that gladden
With the looking into mine,
And touch the hands that tremble
With joy—and sweet eyes shine;
But ah! the fire grows hungry,
And my Castle over in Spain
Crumbles in with a dying splendor,
Whose loveliness mocks my pain.

And the walls of my fairy palace
Fall noiselessly thro' the air,
Tearing soft vine tendrils
Away from their trellises fair,

But the worst of all is the waking
From my dream with a shivering start,
Chilled with the cold and the silence,
And the worse chill at my heart.

Some of the eyes of my vision
Are shining beyond the stars.
In some rest woeful shadows,
Cast by world raised bars.
And the ghostly caressing fingers
Wave a piteous slow farewell.
The good-bye—meaning forever,
Rings in my ear like a knell.

Creeping away from the ashes,
And the darkness and the cold,
Uncanny wings sweep o'er me,
Damp with a graveyard mould.
I go to a slumber—broken
By a wailing sad refrain,
And a solemn chanted chorus,
Whose burden is "never again."

REPLY.

Dear! why have you killed
Our sweet unconscious friendship
And left its pale, unsmiling ghost to stand
Between us evermore with upraised hand—
Forbidding any other love to bloom
Upon its grassy grave, whence it must roam
A pale unquiet thing that turns to you
Its sad, reproachful face.
O friend, could you not see
Within my thoughts your place was that
Of a noble heart—a good true soul,
And one to whom I should have gone
With any grief or joy—well knowing
I should find comfort, help and guide?
Now—all that is passed. No more
Your eyes will ever hold for me
The olden friendly light—instead,

Their retrospective pained regret
Will haunt my very dreams—and yet
Am I to blame?
I would give—if that I might,
Ten of the sunniest years I have to live,
To find abloom within my desert heart
The blossom bittersweet, you call it Love.
It is no fault of yours—but dear,
When I am gone, forget me—nay
Not quite—but just remember,
Those other days before you dreamed—
And waking with a start, your careless hand
Killed that dear friendship; otherwise
It would have seen no fateful sad to-morrow
But one forever fair—to-day.

HIS LAST LETTER.

Dying! You dying—*mon ami*?
Your letter came to me to-day—
And the smile on my lips quite faded
As they slowly grew cold and gray.
The sunshine and shadows grew misty,
My lily drooped low its tall head,
And there seemed to thrill thro' the silence,
A chill, like the touch of the dead.

There came to me swiftly a vision
Of a summer, not long ago past—
Made brighter and better and fairer,
By a friendship that might not last;
Of dark eyes full of longing,
And a love more sad than life,
Shining out from their woeful shadows
Where a will and a soul were at strife.

Of a farewell—a firm hand clasping,
And a glance—where my sad eyes met
Yours, full of a deathless passion,
And a speechless, wild regret;
How the midsummer night seemed to chill me,
As I left you there with your pain,
Passing from starlight to lamplight,
Where sorrow seems useless and vain.

You are passing away from earth's torments,
And well nigh are free from its bonds,
I doubt not your hands are outreaching,
Already, toward the Beyond,
Where shadows and fogs there are never,
Where our dreams are sure to come true,
And no blight finds the heart of our roses,
Where our skies are steadfastly blue.

And I—I shall not forget you.
There is place in each day, sweet or sad,
For memory of all who have loved me,
And helped to make my days glad.
Under the sod on the hillside,
Or down from God's sunny skies,
There will shine thro' my earthly existence
Two fond and faithful dark eyes.

LAST DAYS.

You ask me what I was thinking
Through the silence that suddenly fell
Upon me just at the ceasing
Of your laugh, that rang like a bell.
I was thinking, if you must know, dear,
Of just this time next year,
If we two should be together—
If away—how far or how near.

Wondering if all of this sunshine
Would dwell on us two apart—
Its beauty bring separate sadness
To each divided heart.
And if the unearthly fairness
Of our moonlit accustomed walks,
Would bring sharp thrills of remembrance
Of our dead and gone happy talks.

I do not know what—but something
In the carelessly happy ring
Of your laugh floating off into silence,
Made me think what a different thing

Life would be to me hereafter
With that musical laughter left out.
And the touch of your hand on my arm—
Is it wrong dear, to wonder and doubt?

And then too, this one summer
Stands out to itself alone,
Enriched with a golden glory
That no other summer has known.
A deeper joy than ever before,
Albeit joy dashed with pain.
What is it seems to whisper
"For you two—never again!"

Sweetheart! if you should be gazing
At our favorite stars alone,
With wet eyes and poor lips trembling,
Striving to make no moan,
On the other side of the stars, dear,
I shall thank our God who has given
Us one fair, perfect summer here,
As a foretaste of those of Heaven.

BON SOLDAT.

Ha! Ha! Bravissimo, Major,
That last was a good one,
The prince of good stories after a fight;
Quite the cream of the rest I wager—
Throw on the logs, boys, 'tis chilly to-night.

Yes, the battle was a fierce one to-day,
And some like tigers fought;
I saw young Philip Lane's lithe form,
Darting about in the midst of the fray,
In the glittering flashing sabre storm.

You say he is one of the missing number?
God help his mother at home,
While she prays for her boy with streaming eyes,
His bright hair dabbled—in slumber
Beyond awakening up there he lies.

Poor child! he was little more in years.
But not a veteran of us here,
Was readier to face death than he;
But facing death so often, sears
Us to these piteous things we see.

Ugh! I had forgot that scratch
Of an awkward sabre till now,
And 'tis stiff—what a horrid smart!
I saw it just in time to catch
It, in place of our Colonel's heart.

Here—see the fragment of the blade,
Broken in the sudden tilt.
Christ! how the wound gapes—too late,
'Twas deeper than I thought—I'm afraid
You're wasting time, old boy—tell Kate

Good-bye for me—will you, Victor?
We have little time for love in war;
She's a brave little heart, she'll make no cry,
Even tho' perhaps her eyes may be dim;
You'll tell her I knew how to die?

The moon must have clouded over,
How dark it has grown all at once!
Stir the camp fire—charge boys—huzza!
Bon soldat—O Kate—*Vive le Roi*—
'Twas a good one—no more—a rover!

TWO SUNSETS.

Backward and forward she and I
Paced the sands of the shining beach,
The silence broken by sea birds' cry—
Our sad hearts too full for speech;
Save the plaintive cry of the swift winged bird
And the waves' soft flow—no sound was heard.

We had dreamed our dreams, fair, so fair,
Of a life so sweet and glad and blest.

And that day, watching the sunset rare,
Saw our hopes sink down in the crimson west
And knew that none—nay, not one,
Would arise again with the morning sun!

Her eyes were dark with hopeless pain,
Her white face turned toward the sea
In mute, pale protest; all in vain
I strove to speak. Ah me! ah me!
Our lives stretched out so gray and cold
With love left out—its fairy gold.

We said good-bye—our lips were dumb,
But two souls met thro' our woeful eyes;
My heart was crushed and cold and numb,
And to this very day it lies
Like stone within my breast—nor stirs
At any touch save thought of hers.

* * * * *

Is she living? Yes friend, over yonder,
And no ocean rolls between us now
Hers is the fairer life—I ponder
Oft the reasons—how or why
We call this strange translation death,
That gives us air of bliss for breath.

She went away, I heard, a little while
After I saw her last. I yet remain,
To suffer and meet fate with a smile,
A target for the years and bitter pain.
O sweet! I hear your tender, "it is best,"
Through all these years of vain unrest!

Only a narrow stream keeps us apart,
Narrow, but swift and dark and deep;
So soft it flows, my weary heart
Fain on its peaceful banks would fall asleep,
To wake on further side of crimson west,
To hear her, "dear love, it was best."

MAY TIME.

Two children in the early May
Laugh and chatter—dance and play,
Adorn the tiny play house cool
Subject to little mistress' rule,
Bring acorn cups with water filled—
Aprons witness much that spilled.

Thus their merry game goes on.
So far, rose is free from thorn,
Till some unlucky fay does tempt
Miss Bessie, until now exempt
From any mischief-making thought,
To gain experience dearly bought.

Jack's castle rising high in air,
Its frail points watched with anxious care,
Built solely his Queen Bess to 'sprise,
To note delight in her blue eyes,
Is suddenly in ruins laid
By Bess—now trembling and afraid.

Quick as the hand the house laid low,
Flew his, and left a stinging blow
'Pon naughty Bess's peachy cheek;
Both cried and sulked and wouldn't speak,
Till from far end of small domain
Bess notes Jack's anger on the wane.

And sudden, not to courage lose,
Run little feet, unknowing shoes;
Reaching him she falters low,
"I des—was—only playin', you know,
An'—an'—" then and there
Five little fingers fair

Slipped within Jack's willing hand;
Happiest urchin in the land
He kissed the big tears off her face
Until they no more leave a trace;
Restored again their golden day,
In their sunny lives, glad month of May.

TO-MORROW.

Do not speak of the past as a dead thing,
With that low intonation of pain,
And tears in your voice—still trembling
With memories of never again.
Do you not think the myriad yesterdays,
That passed into things that are gone,
Repeat themselves just the same, dear,
In the happier to-morrows born?

And instead of the backward glances
Of our yearning regretful eyes
Toward the past, that lies behind us
In shadowy uncertain guise,
Shall we not rather turn our longings
Of heart and soul and hands,
To the future's golden promise,
Aglow from sunrise lands?

'Tis said we can never quite know
How well we have loved—till the day
When, out of our heart and home life
The loved one has passed away.
So it is with our happiness here, dear—
We trifle and play, till at last,
We shiver over its ashes,
And tearfully call it our "past."

Don't you think 'twould be wiser and better
If we could but realize now
What sweetness to-day holds for us,
Ere has faded upon her brow
The laurel with which we crowned her—
Ere the light has died from her eyes,
And we know too late we have lost her,
With a sorrowful dumb surprise.

Do not speak of the past as dead, dear,
When the present, it was, so late—
The yesterdays, to-days and to-morrows,
All pass thro' the very same gate.

Let us take what to-day may bring us,
Be it joy and peace—or sorrow,
Knowing full well the end will be
God's gracious, fair to-morrow!

QUERY?

Hate? Yes—no—how do you call it?
I cannot understand. You English,
Your language is so very hard,
So awkward—I cannot tell you
Just what I mean—save in my own,
My native tongue. Only this,
Is it—hate—you say, when I
Seem to feel around my brow
A cruel band of living fire,
Searing all my brain, and raising
My heavy eyelids, find his serpent gaze
Holding my own? When time
Drags painfully, halt and maimed
In his presence?
When the sharp and sudden sound
Of his harsh voice will make me start,
And scatter all calm ideas
Into wild and trembling space?
When if by any awkward chance,
My hand touch his—I cannot help
A childish shiver—just as though
My flesh had met the cold and clammy coils
Of some sleeping serpent—unawares?
If his dark forbidding face
Seems to me to shut away
All of God's dear sunlight, subtracting
The subtle sweet something
That makes it worth one's while to live—
Is that hate?
I would not harm him—there is no grudge,
But sometimes I shut tight my eyes,
As children do—afraid of darkness;
And floating outward on a sea of doubt
Conjecture as to how it will be
Up yonder—'mong the saints.

Either he, or I—will not be there,
Because the earthy has no place
In that pure realm. Sweet Christ! must this
That you call my hate, must he
Ever bar my way up there? God knows!
Not I. At last, I trust all that is left
Will be—fit for the awful change to immortality,
Fit too, to touch the childish dimpled fingers
Of the angel sister, waiting there.
Jewels only shine their brightest
In a setting of dull gold,
Fires look their ruddiest, lightest
To traveler half benumbed with cold.
Of summer birds, we say they never
Sing so sweetly as when gone
Are the summer days forever,
And birdie comes some autumn morn
Lingering in the same old oak tree
Where his summer home has been,
Singing full notes—liquid, free,
Pausing—to begin again,
Letting out his whole heart's music
In that farewell autumn song,
Ere he wings his flight far southward
Where his feathered tribe belong.

WAKING DREAMS.

How did it come that I cared for her?
Well, I can hardly tell you, sir;
Only this, I was lying there,
With hot parched lips—unkempt, unfair,
Chasing the dreams of a heated brain,
Tense hands clenched in nervous pain.

I was lying thus alone, I say,
Unloved—forgotten, the livelong day—
When just in the early even fall
A voice as soft as an angel's call
Whispered my name as ne'er before,
Then lost the sound thro' open door.

But quickly back again it came,
This soft weird thing I could not name;
Was it a dream of wine brown eyes
Floating below in human skies,
Gazing in soft compassion down
Upon my pain drawn forehead's frown?

Was it a dream of smooth white hands
Tenderly binding ice cold bands
About my aching, burning brow,
(I can almost feel them now)
Then white dream fingers' touch,
Whose mesmeric power was such
As soothed away all pain, and sent
Me into the land of sweet content.

A land, wherein I dreamed we two
Roamed all the gracious summer through,
Hand in hand as children go,
Out in the sunshine, to and fro,
She chiding if I culled a flower—
"Let it live its brief bright hour,"
And so for her dear sake
I spare the shy wild things—and wake

To find my vision clear—a dream
Yet not a dream—for I do seem
To find the same clear eyes, the hands;
A vase of fair dream flowers stand
Near my bed, and the perfume rare
Floats vaguely up thro' the freshened air.

Yesterday—just at even fall
I told her my dream—told it all,
Took the soft dream hand in mine,
The touch sent a thrill to my heart like wine,
Raising the drooped face in my palm,
To look for an answer in deep eyes calm,
Turned the dear flushed face from my gaze away,
To hide on my breast forever a day!

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